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ABSTRACT

Noting that, contrary to the first conference, disagreements began to surface among the conference participants of the second conference, this proceedings contains papers presented at the second conference on the teaching of grammar (except for a preconference workshop and one paper). Papers in the proceedings are: "Keynote: Finding Reasons to Teach Grammar to Everyone" (Bill McCleary); "Jessica's 'Power Phrase': Using Sentence Combining to Teach Note Taking" (Chrystena Chrzanowski); "Grammar in the Freshman Composition Class" (Ben Varner); "Teaching Young Writers to Analyze Their Sentences" (Ed Vavra); "The Parts Are the Key to the Whole" (George Kovacs); "Good at Grammar" (Maurice Scharton); "Grammar in the Learning Center?" (Janice Neuleib); "The Effect That Separation of Content and Form Has on Grammar and Syntax Review in Business Writing Textbooks" (Mary Hall); "Teaching Grammar in Business Communications" (Geneva Hagedorn); "A Systematically Based Approach to Grammatical Analysis" (John P. Broderick); "Three-Dimensional Diagrammimg" (Wanda Van Goor); "Approaches to Teaching Teachers Grammar" (Irene Brosnahan); "Grammar Relevance: Human/Computer Interface as a Relevancy Model" (Frank Peters); and "Using Transformational Grammar to Teach Future Teachers" (Cornelia Paraskevas). A list of conference participants is attached. (RS)

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ED 397 438

Proceedings, Second National Conference
of the
Association of Teachers of English Grammar
held at
Pennsylvania College of Technology,
Williamsport, PA on July 15 & 16, 1991

The Teaching of Grammar

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Foreword

The tone of the second ATEG conference was significantly different from that of the first. At the first, people were elated at the possibility of discussing grammar with colleagues without having to defend pedagogical grammar itself. At the second, although the tone was very polite, disagreements began to surface (as I expected they would). Freed from having to defend "grammar," presenters were faced with the much more interesting task - at least for us - of having to defend their particular concepts and approaches to grammar.

The differences in purpose, approach, and theory of the different presenters are implicit in the papers as presented in this book, but they are much more explicit in the videotapes, which include all the questions and answers. (I am still somewhat surprised that there is so little interest in the tapes.) I expect the disagreements to continue, hopefully in the same polite tone, at the upcoming third, and even later conferences of ATEG. That is, after all, what the association is all about.

I have tried, given the problems of time, to reproduce all the papers as accurately as possible. Martha Kolln and George Oliver, who did the pre-convention workshop, decided not to include anything in these proceedings. Unfortunately, Janet Gilbert, from Delta College, University Center, Michigan, was unable to get us her paper, "Halliday Can Help." The final presentation at the conference, by Alice Deakins and Kate Parry, was an introduction to a card game they have developed.

-- Ed Vavra, DIF 112
Pennsylvania College of Technology
One College Drive
Williamsport, PA 17701
March 21, 1992

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Contents

Keynote: Finding Reasons to Teach Grammar to Everyone 4
Bill McCleary, editor, Composition Chronicle

Jessica's "Power Phrase": Using Sentence Combining to Teach Note Taking 16
Chrystena Chrzanowski, William Paterson College

Grammar in the Freshman Composition Class 20
Ben Varner, University of Northern Colorado

Teaching Young Writers to Analyze Their Sentences 24
Ed Vavra, Pennsylvania College of Technology

The Parts Are the Key to the Whole 38
George Kovacs, Briarcliffe College

Good at Grammar 44
Maurice Scharton, Illinois State U.

Grammar in the Learning Center? 51
Janice Neuleib, Illinois State U.

The Effect that Separation of Content and Form Has on Grammar and Syntax Review in Business Writing Textbooks 58
Mary Hall, University of Pittsburgh

Teaching Grammar in Business Communications 64
Geneva Hagedorn, Univ. of Houston-Downtown

A Systematically Based Approach to Grammatical Analysis 66
John P. Broderick, Old Dominion University

Three-Dimensional Diagramming 80
Wanda Van Goor, Prince George's Community College

Approaches to Teaching Teachers Grammar 84
Irene Brosnaham, Illinois State University

Grammar Relevance: Human/Computer Interface as a Relevancy Model 94
Frank Peters, Bloomsburg University

Using Transformational Grammar to Teach Future Teachers 101
Cornelia Paraskevas, Western Oregon State University

Conference Participants 107

Finding Reasons to Teach Grammar to Everyone

William J. McCleary
Editor, Composition Chronicle

Whenever I mentioned to anyone that I was coming down here to Williamsport for a conference of the Association of Teachers of English Grammar, I would get several typical reactions. Why Williamsport, Pennsylvania? Isn't that a strange place to hold a conference? Well, I suppose it is, if one doesn't know anything about Ed Vavra and *Syntax in the Schools.* And since most people don't anything about those subjects, I just say, "Well, why not Williamsport, Pennsylvania?"

The second question then would have to do with why we need an Association of Teachers of English Grammar. What's wrong with NCTE and the Linguistics Society of America? Well, answering that question in full would require me to discuss the history of grammar teaching in America, which nobody, with the possible exception of a few people in the audience today, wants to sit still for. So I'd adapt the first response: "Why not an Association of Teachers of English Grammar? If teachers of technical writing, the history of rhetoric, Milton, Shakespeare, and general semantics can have their own associations, why not grammar teachers?

Of course, you and I know some of the real answers to these questions. However, ATEG is a young organization, so basic questions are still in need of exploration. The Association was formed to "bring back" the teaching of grammar, and that's at least one reason why we now have an Association of Teachers of English Grammar, but that simple statement of purpose opens up a lot of issues that need to be resolved. The two big ones are:

- Δ What good is grammar, anyway?
- Δ If grammar is worth knowing, how should it be taught?

These are the subjects I'm going to deal with today, for they go together. After all, if explicit knowledge of grammar has no good uses, there's not much point in figuring how to teach it. And if it can't be taught to anyone who doesn't already know it -- as many writers have claimed -- there's not much point in figuring out why we should teach it.

I, of course, think that grammar ought to be taught to everyone because it has many good uses for everyone. I don't buy the position that we should only teach it to certain groups that need it the most -- writers and editors, for example. In the first place, if grammar can't be taught to everyone, it probably can't be taught to future writers and editors either. In the second place, grammar controls who will be the future writers and editors, for those whose knowledge of grammar isn't sophisticated are virtually shut out of jobs that require broad and deep knowledge of it. And in the third place, language is such a fundamental part of what it is to be human that everyone ought to know something about it, just as they should about other fundamental aspects of humanity such as history, psychol-

ogy, literature, and mathematics.

However, I'd be the first to acknowledge that these reasons for bringing back grammar are not sufficient. I haven't proved that explicit knowledge of grammar helps anyone, including writers and editors, and I know that there are many important subjects to cover in school, more than we have time for. We don't teach accounting, cooking, or geometry to everyone. People need to specialize. So we need good reasons to teach grammar to everyone.

So this brings me back to where I started, with my two questions -- why to teach grammar and how to teach it. To answer them, I'm going to conduct an exploration -- exploratory discourse. If you're familiar with exploratory discourse as I use the term, you know that the first three stages have already been dealt with. There was a dogma that students needed to be taught grammar so that their oral and written grammar would be better. This dogma proved to be shot full of anomalies, the main one being that researchers were unable to prove any connection between learning school grammar and improvement in the everyday use of grammar. This led to a crisis which was essentially solved by abandoning grammar instruction -- or so it is said, anyway. And now we are in the midst of a search for a new model -- new reasons to teach grammar and new ways to teach it. Much work has already been done on this search, a great deal of it by people in this room. But I would like to take a fresh look and see where I can come out.

Basic information on teaching grammar

The first stage of a search for any new model is simply to gather some information that might help in finding a new model, so that is where I would like to start. And let me start with some personal information, facts about my own practices concerning grammar.

First, I must confess that I like grammar very much as a subject of study. My MA is in English language, a program of grammar and philology, and I was enrolled in a PhD program in linguistics for several years, until done in by a course in Polish morphemics. However, as a person who teaches writing and little else, I must confess that I do not now teach grammar to anyone. Yes, I have editing sessions with my students, and I mark errors on papers, and I explain the rules of usage to anyone who asks. But I don't expect much from such activities, and I don't think I get much.

In other words, I have joined the trend that this new organization, the Association of Teachers of English Grammar, was formed to do something about. I have eliminated **all** formal teaching of grammar, and I don't take seriously those attempts to teach usage that I do conduct. You will find very little grammar in either of my textbooks, and no handbook either. Nor do I ever have my students waste their money on handbooks, drillbooks, or anything like that. I do use sentence combining, sentence modeling and controlled composition in certain situations, but that's a subject I'll get back to presently. You might think that if I were a secondary teacher rather than a college teacher, then I would have more time and reason to teach grammar, but this is not necessarily so. The high school English curriculum in my district -- one of the top school districts in New York State -- has no grammar in it.

Since my specialty and preference is for teaching basic writing, many people find my practices unusual. Other basic writing teachers, it seems, do cover a lot of grammar. However, my practices are only logical extensions of present feelings and knowledge about the teaching of grammar and usage. As far as

I can tell, nothing works; the direct teaching of grammar and usage has no good effects, especially on writing. And if nothing works, why bother? I differ from a friend of mine who has written a well-known textbook for basic writing that includes many exercises on grammar and usage. I once asked him about this. I know that he knows this stuff doesn't work, so I wondered why he went ahead and did it anyway. He looked at me as if I were crazy. "We have to do it," he said. "That's what basic writing is all about."

I'll leave you to ponder the various lessons to be drawn from such an attitude and limit myself to pointing out a second bit of information that may be used in our exploration: As my friend's textbook illustrates, when we lament the lack of grammar teaching, we shouldn't pretend that grammar has dried up and died. In colleges, it's alive and well in legions of basic writing class, with a vengeance. I have here a selection of catalogues to show that I mean.

It doesn't have to be that way in basic writing, of course. My publisher, Wadsworth, which also publishes Bill Robinson's book on basic writing, doesn't have a single grammar or drill book in its basic writing catalogue. But for much of the rest of the world, basic writing is grammar.

Grammar is also alive and well in other composition courses, especially a lot of those that use handbooks. Teachers refer students to the handbooks, and the handbooks cover grammar. Furthermore, the rules of usage are usually discussed in grammatical terms. Another college program with lots of grammar is secretarial science. In fact, secretarial science even puts basic writing to shame with its endless attention to obscure rules of good usage. Journalism and technical writing also try to make use of much grammar.

Grammar is also alive and well in secondary schools, despite the situation in my own district. English textbooks, so-called to distinguish them from literature textbooks, typically contain more grammar than anything else. In fact, I'm currently serving as a reviewer for a new secondary series with a tentative title of *Grammar and Composition.* How innovative! Finally, there is also some grammar in the elementary schools. My son, who is still in elementary school, has been bringing home printed sheets of grammar exercises since the second grade. That's one of the reasons that we switched school districts -- not so much the grammar, which was simple and harmless, but the printed exercise sheets. I don't like them.

Yet there is strong evidence that grammar is not nearly as strong as it once was and that we need a new organization like the Association of Teachers of English Grammar to bring it back. My own students, with a few remarkable exceptions, show an amazing ignorance of grammar. As I related in *Composition Chronicle,* I found it impossible to have students study literary style by examining the grammar of the style. Secondly, there is no doubt that the major organizations representing English teaching -- NCTE, CCCC, MLA, and the like -- are noticeably cool to any discussions of grammar teaching and reluctant to accept articles on grammar. Even the *Journal of Basic Writing* prints few articles on grammar. Grammar may not be dead among the rank and file of English teachers, but among our leading institutions it is barely twitching.

A third bit of information for our exploration is that grammar is no longer the exclusive domain of the English department. It now has its own academic department, called linguistics. Almost 30 years ago, when I majored in grammar for my MA, the major was called English Language and was housed in the English Department. A few years later, I went for a PhD in grammar and found it in

something called the linguistics department. It's relevant to our exploration to look into why this happened and what importance it has for the future of grammar instruction in the English department. To show what has happened, I'd like to take you on a brief excursion through the history of this subject we call English.

Grammar was not the first subject to be shunned by English and forced to develop its own department. One can see similar things happening in the past. English was once a gloriously eclectic subject, sort of like the Democratic Party, that included everything from philology to public speaking to logic to pedagogy. Then written literature reared its lovely head, and from then on the history of English has been the banishment of one subject after another and the formation of new departments to handle the banished subjects. Logic went to philosophy. Public speaking, rhetoric, and oral interpretation went to new speech departments. Drama, especially performance, went to the theater department. Then, most recently, English language went to the linguistics department. It's true that composition was kept in the English department, but that did not save it. It was absolutely destroyed as a respectable subject -- neglected to an intellectual death and kept around only to support graduate students or because the rest of the school demanded it.

The college English department, basically, has become a literature department and, by and large, a department of silent reading of literature. Creating literature has never been an important aspect of English, and reading literature aloud as an art form disappeared entirely. At smaller public and private colleges, a typical department might have two dozen English professors, and among them would be a single grammarian, a single creative writer, and in a truly liberal department an English educator. The rest would be professors of literature, each of whom would have a specialty such as Victorian literature, the novel, or some such thing. At a big school, literature would be alone except, perhaps, for its abused appendage, composition; other subjects would have their own departments. Pretty much, in other words, the college English department has become an island of splendid uselessness. English professors can teach you the history of British and American literature, a smattering of information about other literatures, and literary analysis. But since only a handful of students ever makes use of such information and skills outside of the classroom, college English has become a school activity and nothing else. Secondary English is a little better but not much.

This is no secret, either. I remember once going into a printing supply store and listening to the printers grouse about the difficulty of finding press operators. It seems that the vocational high schools train plenty of press operators but few graduates go into printing. The proprietor of the store explained why. "They don't realize they're learning a saleable skill," she said. "They think it's just something you take, like English."

However, to continue with our exploration, we can see that all is not lost just because grammar joined other former aspects of English by forming its own department. We need to keep in mind that literature was not entirely to blame for the loss of the other subjects. Most of them richly deserved to be kicked out, although not for the reasons that it happened. Rhetoric, as it was taught in the 1800's, deserved to go. It had been reduced to little more than a collection of stylistic tricks with fancy names. Though there were good rhetorics around, all too often it was taught as something highly technical but irrelevant to real public discourse. And even the halfway-decent rhetorics were just that, half-way decent, because they focused on the forms, or modes, of discourse, not purposes.

It was still that way in the 1960's when I began to teach. We got a new department chair who was going to get us into writing, and what did she recommend but paragraphs -- descriptive paragraphs, narrative paragraphs, and the like.

Kicking rhetoric out of English proved to be good for it. In the speech department rhetoric was respected and gradually worked its way back to "real" rhetoric, something that other departments can respect as well. Now this real rhetoric has come back to English, in the composition program. The major concern now is saying something worth saying to someone who needs to hear it. Concern for style and form, while still important, is secondary. We have found that until you have come up with something worth saying, there's little point in laboring over other matters. Concern for details at an early stage in the writing only stops thought.

You can, now, even get a PhD in rhetoric -- and from an English department of all things. This is nothing short of revolutionary. When I started a PhD, fewer than 20 years ago, I had to enrol in an education department in order to study composition. The PhD in composition/rhetoric, now one of the most successful programs, did not exist. Rhetoric, real rhetoric, is the foundation of many -- though far from all -- composition programs and permeates English offerings. Too many schools still have only one composition specialist, sort of comparable to their one language specialist, but that is changing.

Likewise, banishing logic turned out to be beneficial. It allowed logicians to continue developing it until it became obvious to everyone that the logic of logicians was not a suitable topic for English. So there have been attempts to develop logics that would be suitable for discourse that employs logical argument in natural language, and these attempts have met with some success. In fact, there are now courses in written argumentation, and textbooks for the courses contain a lot of logic. It's true that many composition textbooks always had a few pages on logic, but never enough to do anyone any good -- or any harm, as the case may be. Old-fashioned textbook logic was not useful to anyone.

And so it went for other subjects in the English department. Not only had they become devalued in comparison with literature, but they had lost their relevance to language as it is really spoken. Oral performance had degenerated into elocution, drama had reduced to Shakespeare, teacher training had reduced to something called the language arts, and so on.

And so it went for grammar, too. It was not just a matter of the English department's hostility toward everything but literature. Grammar, as she was taught when I began teaching, deserved to go.

Why grammar deserved its fate

Let's consider, as a next step in exploration, just why grammar deserved to go. One problem, ironically, was that the schools probably taught too much grammar. Certainly my colleagues and I were guilty of that back in the early sixties. I'd say that 60% or more of our time was spent on grammar, especially if you count usage and spelling as part of grammar as everyone except professional linguists did then and still does. It was not just that we had more textbook material on grammar than anything else. Nor was it just that the literature in our so-called literature books was wimpy and uninspiring. Nor was it just that we didn't know how to teach composition. All of those were problems, but the main factor, I think, was that grammar was easy to teach. It had right answers, for one thing, and one should never underestimate the lure of right answers; it's the main reason why modern education is so ineffective. But it

was also attractive because learning it was easy for language-oriented people such as English teachers, preparing daily lessons took very little time, and the tests could be graded quickly. For an English teacher, whose alternative is to be faced with a stack of essay exams about literature, or a stack of compositions to grade, a subject that takes little time to teach is highly attractive. And if someone objected, we could point to the errors in student writing and explain that we couldn't deal with those errors until teachers and students had a common language in which to discuss them. I thought that was a novel and compelling argument the first time I used it, and it somehow didn't occur to me to wonder how such a trivial goal could consume 60% of class time. However, we got away with it. After all, the public, like all too many English teachers, associates English solely with correct usage and spelling. It's one of the reasons why I hate to tell anyone what I do for a living. "Oh dear," the response always begins, "now I'll have to watch what I say." This is generally followed by a sad tale about how "English was my worst subject."

The reason we're here today is that this happy situation was due for a fall. Within less than 20 years, grammar went from being at least half of the secondary curriculum and a major part of the college composition curriculum to a minor part of both curriculums, at least in schools that are regarded as enlightened. How did it happen? In much the same way as the others were banished from English.

In the first place was the growing professionalism of linguistics, which led to grammar's becoming a more and more technical subject. First we had descriptive linguistics, then transformational-generative, and the last I heard we had case grammar. School grammar, which came to be called traditional grammar, was discredited. We learned that the traditional categories were inaccurate, the definitions were useless if not downright misleading, and the entire system incapable of handling language as it was spoken and written in real life. Yet most of us could not replace traditional grammar with the new versions because, like the new version of logic that replaced the old Greek logic, the new versions of grammar were too technical for us to learn in the time available.

Another blow was the publication of THAT dictionary, Webster's 3rd New International Unabridged. English teachers and language mavens hated THAT dictionary and switched to others. However, the cat was out of the bag. THAT dictionary made it clear that matters of usage were not as settled as English teachers had long believed or pretended. First, they were not as logical as we thought, that is, based on logical extrapolations from the grammar of the English language. Some were rules based on Latin and imposed a century ago, while others were simply the language of the elite imposed on the rest of the population, and still others were made up out of whole cloth. Secondly, the rules as applied outside of school had much more flexibility than we said they did. For example, here is a headline from our local paper, reflecting the gradual demise of the rule that indefinite pronouns are to be treated as singular: *When everyone has their say, the work gets done better.* And lest you think that that is an aberration, here is an ad for Kodak: *This picture was taken by someone who didn't bring their camera.* The connection between grammar and usage was thereby weakened, thus also weakening our main justification for spending so much time on grammar.

As if that weren't enough, research was being conducted on whether the teaching of grammar had any useful results. The news was bad. With a few exceptions, researchers concluded that instruction in grammar, at best, resulted in higher scores on objective

tests. It had no effect on writing skills, on the correctness of writing, or anything else of practical use. Worse yet, it seemed that the time spent on grammar left students as weaker writers than they would have been if the time had been spent on rhetoric instead of grammar. No wonder grammar has gotten a bad name. And no wonder that professional publications don't want to accept papers on grammar. After such a history of negative evidence, why would anyone accept a paper advocating more grammar? We may argue that the research has produced a blindness to grammar to the point that even the promising new approaches can't get a hearing. That is certainly true but understandable in view of the history of grammar teaching.

Bringing back grammar

However, all is not lost. I am convinced that grammar can come back -- indeed, is coming back -- to the English curriculum and can again become a subject of serious study by English majors as well as linguistic majors. In other words, I think that reasons can be found to return to teaching grammar to everyone. It's just important, as a beginning, to understand that we cannot go back to the old days of a noun is the name of a person, place, or thing. Many people want to do that, and you still see much of it in handbooks and drillbooks. Any attempt to perpetuate such travesties will only delay the comeback of grammar as something truly useful.

How will grammar come back? We now move into another stage of our exploration, a search for a specific hypothesis that we can develop and test. Ordinarily, new models, i.e., new hypotheses, are developed by borrowing models that have been successful elsewhere. Thus, we can discern some lessons in how to bring back grammar by looking at how other subjects came back. This will help us project the kind of new model that we need.

I think the best model for us to use is the model of logic and how it came back to English. Grammar can come back the same way. What allowed logic to come back? As we shall see, there are five basic factors. The logic that came back to English is (1) informal, (2) active and oriented toward production of arguments, nut just analysis, (3) holistic, that is, oriented toward whole pieces of argument, (4) useful to teachers of many subjects, not just logicians, and (5) a successful solution to the problem that we taught logic to solve. All five of these criteria can be met by new grammars. Let us take them one at a time.

To begin with, we can see a model of a new grammar by seeing the kind of logic that has come to the English class. I'm referring to Stephen Toulmin's logic diagram. The Toulmin approach is much criticized by professional logicians because it does not allow you to check an argument for validity and it includes as a single argument that which is, in reality, a web of 2 to 3 arguments. It's a syllogism on its side, sneered one philosopher.

All of that is true but irrelevant to English. We needed a nontechnical approach to logic, and Toulmin is it. The Toulmin approach allows you to deal effectively with arguments in natural language rather than the quasi-mathematical language of the syllogism. It's not an easy approach, and I'm never sure I have the right answer whenever I use the Toulmin diagram to analyze an existing argument. However, that is a strength not a drawback. Furthermore, the Toulmin method can be taught to everyone, not just to English teachers or those who think like logicians or lawyers. I have taught it at a community college, to all types of students, for 15 years, and there is never more than one student per

class who can't seem to get the hang of it. Some get it right away and others need three weeks, but nearly everyone gets it.

I see some very promising nontechnical approaches to grammar. Some examples are controlled composition, sentence combining, and sentence modeling. One needs a technical grammar to construct these exercises, but one does not need such knowledge in order to work with them as a teacher or to do them as a student. Also, the best versions of these techniques do not have single right answers but various answers that students may come up with. These need more work and more publicity, but they provide us with new, informal, useful grammars to offer the profession. We do not need traditional grammar, descriptive grammar, transformational grammar, or any other kind of formal grammar. Those who develop our text materials may need it, but workaday English teachers should be able to teach informal grammar with very little study.

The Toulmin diagram also meets our second criterion, orientation to the production of texts. Anyone using the diagram in a writing class may have students analyze existing written arguments, but this is mostly to help them focus closely on arguments and to catch the rhythm and flavor of argumentation. The diagram is more useful in helping students plan their own arguments. It can be used to outline an argument as a whole from thesis to major pieces of evidence and premises, and the counterarguments to be refuted, or it can be used for planning individual paragraphs when students get stuck on individual arguments as they write.

The most promising new grammars meet this criterion as well. Techniques such as controlled composition and sentence combining may not look very creative -- which I think is why they are not very popular. However, the good ones do have a strong element of production, of producing something that is not in the original text. For example, the original texts often lack sophisticated grammatical constructions, so these must be created by students, with guidance from the instructor and from whoever wrote the exercises. On the other hand, sentence modeling is quite clearly very creative and results in something new.

The Toulmin logic diagram is also holistic, which is another modern direction. As I showed above, a student can use the diagram to plan an entire argument, sort as if writing an outline. The diagram can also be used to write individual parts of the argument -- to support or attack particular reasons, for example. However, the student first sees the argument as a whole.

Our new grammar should do the same for us. Writing sentences or paragraphs that are rhetorical isolates doesn't work, even for first graders. It may be that first graders only write paragraphs, but that simply means that their productions are short, not that they are just paragraphs. The same is true for sentences. The building block mentality, in which students first write words, then sentences, then, paragraphs, then whole essays, has nothing to do with the way that real people write.

All students can and should write whole pieces of discourse -- or sections of whole pieces, and the new grammar should help them do it. That's why I prefer sentence combining exercises that result in whole essays, not just those that result in disconnected sentences as with the early sentence combining materials. We do need repetitious practice in all kinds of sentence structures, such as that provided in early sentence combining exercises, in order to get syntactic fluency, and it's harder to ensure that sufficient variety and repetition is built into whole-essay sentence combining. However, it can be

done if we just work at it.

Next, the Toulmin diagram shows how something truly useful in English will also have applications to other subjects. I have been talking about Toulmin for a long time, and my first talk about the diagram was on applying Toulmin to statistics. And Toulmin first came into English through the law, through Brand and White's book, *Legal Writing*. Toulmin himself shows how his diagram can be applied to any subject; in fact, he believes this to be one of the major strengths of his approach.

In like manner, the new grammar must be useful in a wide variety of contexts if it is to be successful. We are finding that American students are poor in lots of other areas besides writing, and that the main problem is that subjects are taught in isolation from their use and in isolation from other subjects. Many students cannot learn things in isolation from their use, and almost all students need more practice with new skills that they get within the 50 minutes per day that the subject is taught. I think that the isolation of subjects from practical use and from other subjects is the main reason why American students are so poor in math, for example. I assume that the new grammar will be taught in connection with correctness in writing, but that's not enough. It must become a practical tool to improve correct writing, not just to correct errors. And it must be capable of being taught in connection with other subjects, as well. At the very least, it ought to be taught in connection with literature, both in reading literature and in creative writing. For example, it's easy to imitate Hemingway, but to understand fully the nature of his achievement requires application of grammar to his texts. One might say that the main reason that so many modern texts sound so ordinary is that writers have not paid attention to their grammar. Developing a distinctive voice is not simply a matter of metaphor and subject; it's also a matter of developing distinctive syntax.

We will need to find ways to connect it to other subjects as well. An ideal place will be secretarial science, although it will be difficult to get those teachers to give up their drills. But it could also be taught in connection with math, especially to help students understand so-called story problems; it could be taught in science, especially in the reading and writing of scientific articles; and in social studies grammar should be invaluable in the study of historically important texts. A successful new grammar will allow the teacher of any subject to apply grammar to his or her subject without having to be a real grammarian any more than someone using the Toulmin diagram is a real logician. For example, the history teacher could use a lesson in sentence combining or controlled composition to show students what would happen if the Declaration of Independence had been written with different grammatical constructions -- and this can be done without the teacher's needing to know much about grammar. You or I could write the exercise, and the history teacher could use it without a bit of explicit knowledge of grammar.

Finally, we come to the matter of correctness. The Toulmin diagram is also proving, I think, to help do for the logic of student writing what we would like for a new grammar to do for correctness. That is, logic has been taught in English because student writing was perceived to be illogical. This reasoning is uncannily like the justification for teaching grammar in English, and the outcome is the same as well. That is, one does not become more logical by the formal study of logic any more than one becomes more grammatical by the formal study of grammar. Students, particularly the older ones, are already as logical as they are grammatical, and what they need to know is when to use what they know. Their preferred response to a dilemma is not to apply logic but to handle it in an-

other way, most likely to test the conclusion they have been offered in terms of their personal interests. With the Toulmin diagram, students learn to apply the logic they already know and to use, in writing, the logical connectors that allow readers to follow their reasoning.

One or more of these new grammatical techniques will also prove, I think, to be the answer to do for usage what the Toulmin diagram can do for logic. Certainly, that is the aim of controlled composition. However, I haven't seen any concrete evidence of success so far. It must be said that at present there is no proven answer to the usage problem. That is, there is no teaching approach that has been shown through acceptable research to bring about a reduction in the number of errors in student writing. The modern approach is to teach rhetoric instead of usage, and hope that errors will go away once students get a handle on content. Or we handle errors by teaching about them during the editing process, what a recent book calls "at the point of need." Both of these are certainly my approaches. As I said at the outset, I long ago gave up on handbooks, drills, and all other methods of direct teaching of usage. Yet this approach has no more backing from research than any other approach as far as I know.

The notion that we cannot do anything about errors is not popular, of course. I remember not long ago being present at an orientation for new freshman composition teachers when one of the neophytes asked what to do about the errors in student writing. I told him that there was nothing that could be done directly about it. If he would concentrate on teaching rhetoric and organization, many of the errors would disappear, but there would be nothing he could do directly to influence the matter. At this point, I glanced at the director of composition and noticed that he was looking like a thunder cloud. It seems that I had revealed one of the dirty little secrets of the composition profession, which is only supposed to be known to composition specialists, not to the people in the trenches. As my friend the textbook writer said, we have to do teach grammar, so the fact that it doesn't work is irrelevant to our daily work.

Well, it's true that we have to do it, but at this point there is no need to take it seriously. I am hoping that the new grammar will figure out the answer, and I strongly suspect that the answer will come about through an adaptation of sentence combining, controlled composition, modeling, or a combination of such techniques. My own basic writing textbook has almost no lessons in correctness, but a friend told me that teachers at his school are adapting my sentence combining exercises for that purpose. At first I was horrified, but then I decided that this makes sense. All of my exercises are holistic, by which I mean that each exercise results in a complete essay. Some essays require application of certain rules of syntax, punctuation, and capitalization, and if instructors want to use those occasions as the basis of mini-lessons, that might be a good idea. For example, some essays use direct quotations, so instructors might use those essays as occasions to coach students in how to handle the capitalization, punctuation, and syntax of sentences with direct quotations in them. With a little organizing and planning in advance, I probably could have ensured that issues of correctness were covered systematically and could have provided instructors not only with an index to the coverage but also some mini-lessons.

Certainly something must be done about correctness. Grammar is connected with correctness in the public mind, and the same is true of the minds of the great majority of writing teachers, who have very little exposure to scientific grammar. If it isn't, there will be pressure to turn the new grammar into the old grammar, which at least has the

comfort of familiarity if not success. Also, though the incidence of error is exaggerated, some people have so little control over error that it does hold them back.

The new model of a new grammar

In sum, that is our new model, which I have built on the model of the Toulmin logic diagram. We need a new grammar that is nontechnical, oriented to action, holistic, successful in solving real problems, and useful by teachers outside of English. If it can be done for logic, it can be done for grammar as well. And, as I have suggested, it is being done for grammar, with sentence combining and a host of other techniques. It's just that we need a clear vision of what we are about, we need to continue to develop the promising techniques, and we need research to prove the effectiveness of what we are doing.

Research is not the complete answer, of course. Much educational research has been done on this or that technique for teaching English, and most of it has been uninspiring to say the least. Probably, that's because the researchers had no clear vision of the field they were working within and were just randomly testing this technique or that technique with no expectation of what they might find. Other research, such as that on sentence combining, has been consistent but largely ignored after the first flurry of enthusiasm. Again, part of the problem is that sentence combining was never put into a larger context. However, opposition to research comes from a variety of sources, and that will mean that the problem of the new grammar will become a problem of public relations as much as a problem of academics.

Much opposition will come from teachers of English as a traditional subject, who have been shellshocked by their exposure to student writing and have retreated to traditional grammar either as a hoped-for panacea or as a refuge. These are often people who believe in a lot of structure. They think that it's only logical to assume that if you teach X students will learn X; for example, if you teach capitalization, students will learn to capitalize. They refuse to believe that no one, including themselves, learns to capitalize that way, and so they will not be receptive to methods that get at the same skills in an indirect manner. They are also supported by an enormous and profitable handbook industry. If you write a rhetoric, whoever edits your book will also be editing a dozen or so other new rhetorics at the same time. But a major handbook is not handled that way. It is such a profitable enterprise that one editor will be assigned to do nothing else. And it is so profitable to the author as well, that the author won't want to jeopardize sales. We must admit, moreover, that many of the major people in composition whom we would expect to lead us out of the morass of old grammar have compromised themselves by writing these handbooks. There is also a large industry producing drillbooks and drill software.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who believe in almost no structure for a writing course. These are people whom we all admire very much -- the folks at the National Writing Project and composition specialists like Ken Macrorie, Don Murray, and Peter Elbow. The good people among them will pay attention to research. However, the low-structure approach often picks up disciples who tend to become dogmatic about their methods and would not use grammar even if it proved worthwhile. It also attracts enthusiasts who do not in the least believe in composition. They believe in literature and would prefer to have their students write poems and stories. When forced to teach composition -- i.e., something that is not creative writing -- the only type of composition that they value is the personal essay, which is, after all, the

most like literature. These people are also not going to be receptive to a new grammar however enlightened and useful. The very idea of sentence combining makes them cringe.

So the Association of Teachers of English Grammar has its work cut out for it. I hope that what you have in mind is something like what I have laid out for you here. Some of you may have in mind bringing linguistics to English, and I don't object to that, except that I don't think we can justify teaching linguistic to everyone. Some of you may have in mind bringing back traditional grammar, and I would object to that. I want something that can be taught to everyone and that will be useful to everyone.

15

JESSICA'S "POWER PHRASE": USING SENTENCE COMBINING WHEN TAKING NOTES FOR BASIC RESEARCH PAPERS

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I remember my first term paper vividly. Its topic: Walt Whitman. I shudder today when I think of myself at sixteen grappling with a subject so weighty that it continues to be worth volumes; however, educators twenty years ago recognized little about focus -- or about helping students understand the writing process. Indeed, no one even used the term "process" in those days. In my favor, I did love Whitman, an affection I carry about as loose baggage even today, and I was diligent. And so I began reading and taking notes -- on his life, on *Leaves of Grass*, on his associations with New York and other people... The more information I found, the more I wrote down. Eventually, I had a lovely stack of index cards, and I was able to make enough sense of them to write an outline, another pre-process fossil.

Then, the moment arrived. I had to write the paper. The teacher -- who, by the time's standards was very good, especially in her enthusiasm -- nstructed us to follow the outline to write the paper. I therefore proceeded to string together the sentences of my outline like the gaudies they were. I have no recollection of how or why I added footnotes; my guess is that their inclusion was somewhat arbitrary. My grade on the paper: F.

Years later, when I decided to teach English, I swore that no student of mine would go through that experience. I expect no magical research-writing hormone to appear. Instead, I continually refine how I teach the research process. And this year I stumbled on a gem.

I think most writing teachers agree -- regardless of their past experiences or the level on which they teach -- that students must be assigned research projects at some point in their academic careers. Writing does come from personal experience, but one of those experiences should be reading to learn, that is, to own information.

The problem arises when instructors take for granted the plethora of skills needed to write well when writing about that newly owned data, a concept far removed from mechanical details such as bibliographic form. Obviously, students need to be able to read carefully, they should be skilled note-takers, and they must distill the information so that it may be presented in a clear, coherent manner. Inside of these skills, however, are myriads of others. Some are addressed simply. For example, students should not be permitted to comment on literature without defending their comments with specifics from the text. This allows teachers to quickly diagnose the problem of building grandiose generalizations upon scant information. More important, it allows students to experience the autonomous authority that comes with reading well. Finally, it alleviates the anger and frustration created when an instructor says "no" to a far-flung interpretation -- a problem I find existing well onto the freshman level in college.

Similarly effective is the old-fashioned grouping of note cards into categories to form a rudimentary list of points to be covered in the paper. Associating similar ideas (comparison) and differentiating among divergent ones (contrast) takes time, but it is a crucial prerequisite to analytical thinking, and even the simplest research paper requires some analysis.

The knotty area seems to occur somewhere between these two, somewhere between taking notes and grouping them into categories. This, therefore, became my focus during the past school year. I must admit that notebooks were a large part of the focus and that students wrote in them every day. In fact, the various kinds of writing that belong in a notebook is worthy of a paper in itself. For these purposes, however, students must be well-acquainted with not only copying from the blackboard, but with dictation, question-asking, anticipating and evaluating, and exploratory writing. I also teach syntax and reinforce basic coordinate and subordinate structures with sentence combining exercises. These are based, first, on the literature at hand; then, on appropriate companion pieces. For example, students combine sentences based on Thoreau's *Walden* before they read it; afterward, they may combine sentences based on a selection from *Cape Cod* or "Civil Disobedience." If students are unfamiliar with these modes of learning, I'm not sure the technique at hand would work.

After students choose and refine their topics (in American Literature, they may choose any aspect of American life that intrigues them) and after bibliographic documentation is reviewed and we spend time in the library as a group finding and reviewing possible sources, the note-taking process begins. Students are required to take three types of notes -- summary, paraphrase, and quotations -- which I define for them as follows:

Summary Note: the main idea of a passage that gives general information

Paraphrase: more complex ideas from a passage that involves specific, detailed information

Quotation: not a quotation cited, but an observation provided by the author who is supplying the information, copied word-for-word

These definitions require students to read with a purpose (identifying the sort of information given). However, they do not necessarily work with material of a more complex nature and must be adapted to less generalized topics (for example, literary analysis).

Instructors may assign any number of notes. For a 3-5 page paper, 50 is usually sufficient. What is more important than the overall number of notes is the ratio of types. This past year, I required 20 summary notes, 20 paraphrases, and 10 quotations. Specific detail is essential to good writing, though; so in the future I will weight the notes in favor of the paraphrases, splitting the difference between the other types.

Students have little difficulty with summary notes or quotations; in fact, these are the more traditional types and may therefore be familiar to them. What they do while paraphrasing is less common, though it is a fairly straightforward process. First, students read, determining whether the information given is general or specific. As they find and read specific material, they jot down notes, reviewing the material to check for accuracy. They then combine those notes into single sentences.

The only difference between a typical sentence combining exercise and this one, which students create by and for themselves,

is that I allow notes to appear in fragmented form. The following example, from the notes of high school sophomore Christopher Johnson, shows this fragment-to-complex sentence progression:

Men, tools, materials--spaced in sequence of operations
Each part--travel least distance raw material...least distance...finished prod.

Ford devised the concept that men, tools, and materials must be placed in a sequence of operations that would allow each part to travel the least distance from its start as raw material to its end as a finished product.

Preliminary notes also may take the form of sentences. Soo Bang, another tenth grader, wrote several sentences and found the relationships between them, adding style to her data.

Key was pleased to see it sung everywhere.
He thought the popularity would not last.
He had written a song ten years before, but that had quickly been forgotten.

Although Key was pleased to see his song sung everywhere, he thought the popularity wouldn't last because ten years ago he had written a song that was quickly forgotten.

Clearly, Soo needs to edit. Perhaps Key should be pleased to "hear" his song sung, he might think "its" popularity wouldn't last, and the old song should have been written ten years "earlier." So what? These sentences are merely the groundwork for the paper; no drafting has even begun!

Adding this single step to the note-taking process does not alleviate all students problems as they move from notes to drafting. In fact, Soo needed several conferences to adequately develop her paper. Adding sentence combining to the process does do several things, though.

Most dramatic, my students enjoyed taking these notes. It took me awhile to understand how and why this change had come about, for previous classes had moaned and groaned through them. Then it hit me. I had given control of the process back to the students. They were as responsible as ever for the raw data; but, new in this technique, they also had control over the relationships within it and with the presentation of it at a very early stage in the writing process.

Most heart-warming, the voices that came through in the final papers were genuine, unlike the canned comments I'd become so accustomed to reading in term papers. Unlike other kinds of writing, where personal experience and opinion are crucially important, a research paper tends to review what others have said. Offering students the opportunity to manipulate the data early on in the process seems to have had a profound effect on the voices that appeared in the finished products.

Finally, and I think most important, spending quality time with the data helped students come to know the material so well that ownership of it was never a perplexing question. They sorted their cards into categories, jotted down the main points the paper was to make, and were instructed to write everything they knew about each point, from memory, not consulting their notes. Preliminary paragraphs were, in general, better developed than they had ever been, and several students commented that they were surprised to find how much they knew "without looking." This made the insertion of supporting detail that needed documentation an easier concept for them to grasp. Furthermore, I got final papers that contained appropriate numbers of notes, not strings of them.

More recently than the failed term paper, I remember learning about "idiolects" in a graduate linguistics course. The utter sense of these "made-up words" astounded me then; it continues to astound. Imagine my surprise and delight, then, when I read Jessica Holmes' cards. Each carefully labeled, I read through "Summary" and "Quotations," then broke into peals of laughter. She'd mistaken "Paraphrase" 20 times, labeling each card "Power Phrase." The more I think about it, the more I know she may be right.

Grammar in Freshman Composition

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For over twenty years I have been teaching freshman composition at the University of Northern Colorado, a state university of approximately eleven thousand students. To my dismay, the average freshman entering our university is writing on about the seventh-grade level, and I suspect that our freshmen are not unique. Poor writing is a national problem, not a local one. Most students enrolling in my composition classes enter without knowing much about subject-verb agreement, punctuation, pronoun case, or sentence construction. Out of a class of twenty-five students, more than half will not know what a sentence fragment is and nearly all will not know what a comma splice (or comma fault) is. Last year, a student told me in all earnestness -- and to my astonishment -- that he had never even heard of the pronoun "whom"! Something clearly needs to be done.

The writing skills of our freshmen (most of them the children of middle-class parents) are so weak that it takes at least a semester to bring their skills up to the college level. That is why I place less emphasis on content at this early stage of the students' educations. I am more interested in how the students say something in their essays than in what they say. Once the students have mastered their grammatical tools and understood the rudiments of a blueprint, then they may set about building a structure. Many metaphors can be used to describe this process, and I have had quite a few vigorous disagreements with my more content-oriented colleagues about it, but grammar is the foundation of any well-written communication. Grammar liberates, not confines.

That is why I have developed a method of grading compositions based almost exclusively on the avoidance of grammatical errors. I simply deduct one point for each grammatical error. Five or fewer errors earn the student an "A"; six to ten errors earn a "B"; eleven to fifteen earn a "C"; and sixteen to twenty earn a "D." More than twenty grammatical errors warrant an "F." In addition, if there is even one careless sentence fragment, run-on, or comma splice in the essay, the highest grade the composition will earn is a "C," and the point deduction begins from there. Of course, I also deduct points for inadequate thesis, poor organization, faulty logic, insufficient supporting examples, and lack of syntactical maturity, but the preponderance of the student's grade is based on the student's avoiding grammatical errors. I expect an error-free essay or one very nearly so.

To help the students attain this level of expertise, I require that each student submit a draft of his or her essay, and on the draft I mark the number of errors in each line without identifying where the errors are. The student then has approximately one week to ferret out the errors before submitting the final draft, the one that is graded. Each

student also has access to the university's writing lab, where the tutors have been instructed to assist the student in finding the errors, not in doing the finding themselves.

During the composition process, class meetings are spent not on rhetorical strategies or on arguing philosophical conundrums but on discussing and practicing subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, pronoun case, punctuation, sentence construction, and so on. Each student has a copy of Watkins and Dillingham's Practical English Handbook (Houghton-Mifflin), though I think nearly any good handbook would do, and I provide the class exercises. There is nothing flamboyant going on; Robin Williams of the Dead Poets' Society would feel quite out of place here. The emphasis is on rote drill and memorization. It is strictly a "back to basics" writing class.

There are five out-of-class essays and five in-class essays, each graded with the same rigor. By the time the students write their in-class essays (about halfway through the course), they have become adept at eliminating most errors and have developed good proofreading skills. I also administer a midterm examination and a final examination, both of which are multiple-choice grammar tests. Altogether, by the end of the semester, the students have performed twelve graded tasks (ten essays and two examinations). I do eliminate two of the lowest grades to provide some encouragement. The average grade point of the composition course is a 2.1 on a 4.0 scale.

This method of instruction also permits an increase in class size. In the fall of 1989, I was given an opportunity by the chairman of the department to conduct an experimental freshman composition course to alleviate the backlog of students. Over seventy students signed up! I was also assigned three experienced graduate teaching assistants to help in the grading of compositions. There were several interesting results of my conducting such an experiment.

First, it soon became disturbingly evident that the teaching assistants were not skilled in identifying grammatical errors. They often did not recognize errors in dangling modifiers, pronoun case, pronoun agreement, and especially had difficulty with punctuation. One even asked me confidentially to explain what a comma splice is. There was an unsettling tendency to overlook misspellings. What they had been teaching in their own composition classes, I have no clear idea, except that they had been emphasizing "creativity," "personal expression," and "holistic grading" to their students. In other words, they had been teaching freshman composition in exactly the same way they had been taught.

I promptly set about instructing them during a few intensive meetings in how to identify certain errors. I also felt it necessary to look over the student essays they had graded (each of us had approximately twenty essays to grade), and until they caught on, I had to change many grades. By the middle of the semester, though, the teaching assistants had finally learned to identify most errors and genuinely seemed appreciative that someone had taught them a skill that would prove useful in their careers. In fact, one of the teaching assistants, who is now a composition instructor at a community college in Wyoming, wrote that his chairman " . . . told me that the reason I got this job was because of my experience grading essays for your experimental English class. He said that the hiring committee was hesitant to offer me the job because of my young age; however, once they found out about my extensive grading experience, they felt that I could handle grading lots of compositions fairly. This is yet another good argument for the experimental composition class." I have since discussed with the department the possibility of creating a "men-

tor program," in which all teaching assistants would be assigned to experienced professors who would presumably teach them how to grade compositions, but this program has not yet come about.

A second result was that the English Department faculty, once everyone discovered what I was doing, became almost unanimously opposed to the experimental class. Over the years, I have often considered myself to be the odd man out by emphasizing grammar instruction and error avoidance in my composition courses within a department whose members revere McCrimmon, Macrorie, Elbow, and Kinneavy. Now I was doing the same thing on a scale never before imagined! There were many heated discussions. I was told repeatedly that "the research" demonstrates that large composition classes are an impossibility and that grammar instruction has nothing to do with writing. Perhaps they had vaguely in mind the Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer "harmful effects" study (Research in Written Composition. Urbana, 1963), the study by Elley and others in New Zealand ("The Role of Grammar in a Secondary School English Curriculum," Research in the Teaching of English 15: 5-22), or even the more recent DeBeaugrande study ("Forward to the Basics: Getting Down to Grammar," College Composition and Communication 35: 358-67). But whenever I would ask them to produce the documentation, they would not -- or could not -- respond.

Over the last twenty years, I have come to mistrust the validity of "the research," and I am sure that many of you have also. Martha Kolln's excellent article, "Closing the Books on Alchemy" (College Composition and Communication 32: 139-151), contains a fine critical evaluation of the validity of the earlier studies (though I know she will disagree with my emphasis on error avoidance). I know from my own experience in the classroom that grammar instruction combined with writing practice can indeed be successful and that error-free writing does not necessarily mean effective writing, but at the freshman level --given the poor writing skills of the students --error-free writing is quite an accomplishment.

The controversy within the department grew. During a meeting with the dean, the chairman, the composition director, and me, the composition director, who is usually quite affable and reasonable, abruptly left the room exclaiming, "I'm open minded -- but I'm not open minded about this!" A department meeting was soon called, vigorous discussion ensued in which much negative comment was made about the course, and later a letter was sent to the chairman by the composition director. It ended by saying, "I will emphasize that in a meeting of the Department in September, members spoke against the arrangement, that no one spoke in favor of it, and that under no circumstances can your behavior be construed as representing the will of the Department." The upshot was that the chairman, faced with a rebellion, had no choice but to discontinue the experiment at the end of the semester.

The third -- most important -- result, however, was that the students' writing skills improved, and in some cases improved dramatically. For example, in a forty-question, multiple-choice grammar test which I gave them at the beginning of the semester, the average score was only seventeen correct. A few students even scored as low as seven correct. By the middle of the semester, though, I gave them another forty-question, multiple-choice grammar test similarly constructed, and the average score then was thirty-one correct. There was an average improvement of fourteen points, and some students improved by considerably more. By the end of the semester, they took a multiple-choice grammar test consisting of one

hundred questions, and the average was seventy-five correct. Very few of the students were still writing sentence fragments or comma splices, and all had learned to construct the basic five-paragraph essay. Probably the greatest improvement was in student confidence. For most of them, there was an increased sense of control over a skill that had eluded them in the past.

Out of sixty-seven students who completed the course, twenty-two evaluated it as "excellent," twenty-five as "very good," and twenty as "good." No one evaluated it as "poor." The following are just a few examples of student comments: "I learned a lot of basic rules for grammar that were not taught to me in high school"; "I liked learning the grammar skills that are necessary to write clearly"; and "Before I took this class, writing was not one of my specialties. Since I have decided to major in business, however, I knew my grammar and writing skills needed to be perfected. After taking this class, I now feel comfortable about writing." On the other hand, one student who nevertheless evaluated the course as "good" wrote, "You cannot grade strictly on grammar. That idea is absurd. You have taken out all of the fun and excitement I once found in writing. All I worry about now is where I'm going to put my commas." The most perceptive comment, though, was made by one of the three teaching assistants at the end of the semester: "Most composition classes teach a little grammar and a lot of composition. This was the first class I've seen where a little composition was taught along with a lot of grammar -- and it worked!"

Teaching Young Writers to Analyze Their Sentences

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> The best hypothesis, [Ptolemy] said, was the simplest that would comprehend the facts.
> - Daniel J. Boorstin, The Discoverers (NY:Vintage, 1983) 98-99.
> (And we thought Occam discovered the razor!)

The presentation I gave at the conference consisted of a computer video presentation, a handout, and a discussion of students' writing that was heavily dependent on the overhead projector. I have adapted that presentation for these proceedings, and, in the process, I have attempted to answer some of the questions that were raised after my presentation.

If anyone is interested in the computer presentation, it requires an IBM compatible computer with 640K of memory and a VGA monitor. Simply send me $5 to cover the cost of the double-density disk and mailing.

Why do students need to know grammar, and what grammar do they need to know? Before discussing my answers to those questions, I would like to suggest why my answers differ from those of many of my colleagues.

As I listen to the presenters at ATEG conferences, it seems to me that they fall into two main groups: the seekers and the responders. The seekers attend the conference because they believe that something should be done, but they are not sure of what: they come seeking alternatives. The responders, (among whom I include myself), come with a passion: we BELIEVE in what we are teaching, and we want to offer it to others.

The responders, in turn, themselves fall into two main groups: the traditionalists and the innovators. The traditionalists usually offer techniques and various exercises, but I think they miss the point: the pedagogy of grammar needs radical, not cosmetic surgery. But the innovators also have a problem: most of them are linguists, and they love grammar. In almost every case, they are enamoured of a particular approach to grammar: structural, transformational, systemic, etc. And (I hope they will forgive me for saying this.) what I see them doing is what I saw my peers doing when I was a graduate assistant teaching lit. & comp.: they take into their classrooms what they themselves are learning and enamoured of. Most of them teach teachers, and they teach them structural, transformational (etc.) grammar. But the question I have not heard them address is: what should their students (future teachers) teach a fourth, fifth, or sixth grade student - and why?

This, to me, is the crucial question. In working with teachers over the years, I have often seen that they are simply at a loss to apply structural or transformational grammars in their classrooms. As a result, they fall back on Warriner, etc. Teaching future teachers grammar is not good enough -- unless we also show them how it applies to their own students. It is, I believe, because they have not addressed this question that so many of my colleague/linguists criticize what they consider to be my "traditional" terminology. But

Constructions & Concepts that Students Need to Know

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The Students' Goal

Students can relate every word in any sentence to the subject & verb in the main clause by using one or more of the constructions and/or concepts on this

The Constructions

Prepositional Phrases

Nine Parts of Speech

Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Verb, Adverb, Preposition,
Coordinating Conjunction, Subordinating Conjunction, Interjection

Four Variations of the Basic Sentence Pattern

S/V
S/V/PN
S/V/PA
S/V/(IO)DO

Clauses (Main & Subordinate)

A subordinate clause always functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb. A main clause is a clause that is not subordinate (and it includeds all clauses subordinate to it).

Verbals:

Gerundives (often called "participles")

Gerunds

Infinitives

Appositives

His idea, **that construction should continue on Saturday,** saved the company $50,000.

Nouns Used as Adverbs

The plane landed three **miles** from here.

Noun Absolutes

He stood, **his face pale,** and watched them.

Delayed Subjects

James wanted to know if it is easy **to ride** a motorcycle.

Retained Complements (after passive voice)

Murray was considered **foolish.**

Interjections

It was, **to be more precise,** the best day in his life.

Direct Address:

Bill, come here.

The Concepts:

Compounding
&
Ellipsis

25

have they stopped to think that, although their terms are non-traditional, they are also often mutually exclusive, complex, and highly specialized? I have little doubt that they can teach college students to analyze sentences using structural, transformational, or systemic terms. But which set of terms are their students going to use with school children? Are we going to have a national school system in which some fifth graders learn structural grammar while others learn transformational or systemic? Are we really looking for such chaos? Or can we agree on a set of basic terms to be used through high school?

I am hoping that we can do the latter, and the terms I am proposing are listed on the preceding page. Most of the terms are traditional, but the concepts underlying them - and the approach to teaching them - are not.

On the Question of Terms

One of the problems of the linguists is that their terminology is not widely understood, even by teachers of English. That is why, for example, the important studies of Hunt and O'Donnell on the natural development of syntactic structures received such a weak reception: the teachers simply could not penetrate the transformational terminology. Although it has resulted in many of my colleagues believing that I favor traditional grammar, I have intentionally adopted traditional terms for the simple reason that, if the teaching of grammar is to be changed, it must be changed by a mass movement of teachers -- and they will want to understand what they are doing. It is, to a large extent, a question of audience.

With a few modifications, traditional terms are quite adequate for developing a descriptive syntax of English. I have split the conjunctions, thereby creating nine rather than eight "parts," for the simple reason that they have entirely different functions. Most of the definitions in this approach, if they are used at all, are based on function. I do require students to memorize the definition of a clause: "a S/V/C pattern plus all the words that go to (modify) it." But subordinate clauses are defined as clauses that function as a noun, adjective, or adverb. Main clauses have no such function.

Several colleages at the conference objected to my use of the term "noun" -- they want it reserved for the "form" as opposed to the "function." Such a distinction, however, will result in endless debate about what the thing should be called -- "nominal clause"? Traditional textbooks have been calling the things "noun clauses" for over a century, and I can see no reason to confuse the issue by introducing new terminology, especially since my definition does not say that a noun claue IS a noun; rather, I say that any clause that FUCNTIONS as a noun can function (subject, direct object, etc.), we will call a "noun clause."

A more interesting objection to my terms and concepts was that the basic sentence pattern is binary (S Phrase, V Phrase), whereas I describe it as triune: S/V/C, the complement being either empty (zero), or a predicate noun, predicate adjective, or a direct object. When I asked why the basic sentence pattern is binary, I was told that "that is the fact." As the historian Edward Carr has shown, however, there are no "facts" outside a theory. The primary reason for linguists seeing the basic sentence pattern as binary is that structural grammars, with their immediate constituent analysis, were based on the method of cutting sentences into two parts, and then cutting each part into two, etc., until the whole sentence was cut apart. That structuralist principle, moreover, was probably based on the traditional distinction between "subject and predicate," a distinction which I never introduce to students. Could it be that, with the triune distinction, I am less traditionalist than my modernist critics?

In a pedagogical grammar, the triune dis-

tinction simpy makes more sense. The verb is at the core of every sentence, but the verb is potentially "open" at both ends: by putting "who or what?" before the verb, students can begin to find the subject. By putting "whom or what?" after it, they can find the complement. But the justification for the triune division goes beyond pedagogical expediency.

Because he is considered a "traditionalist," the work of the Danish grammarian Otto Jespersen has been largely fotgotten. But Jespersen explores some interesting concepts, including one between what he calls "nexus" and "junction." "Junction" is very close, if not identical to, what most of us know as "modification." "Nexus," on the other hand, is the relationship between the subject/verb/complement. Jespersen devotes several chapters in each of the books listed below to these concepts, so I cannot do his distinction complete justice here. What he seems to have been suggesting, however, is that the "lines of force," if I may use a magnetic metaphor, are stronger between the words in the S/V/C pattern than they are in junction/modification.

If we examine Jespersen's suggestion from a psycholinguistic perspective, it makes sense. (A psycholinguistic model of the reading process is part of my computer presentation.) Let's begin with the verb, "built." "Built" is obviously not a sentence. According to the binary linguists, it is a verb phrase that requires a subject phrase. So we'll add one:

Dave built

I would suggest that, although some linguists might not agree, the majority of speakers of English would still say that we do not have a sentence: something is missing. With many verbs, the complement is just as important to the sentence as is the subject:

Dave built a house.

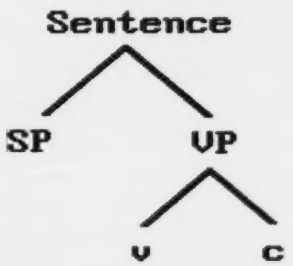
There are, of course, verbs that do not require a complement, but they can be easily understood as "zero" complements, a concept which is used by many linguists.

[Note: Some readers may focus on the "a" in my example, and want to claim that it undercuts the entire distinction between nexus and junction. I would suggest that the "a" is a result of a higher level of mastery of the language, i.e., a mastery of the conventions, not the necessities. All one need do is to think of foreigners just learning the language. "I want apple" (the basic pattern) is mastered early. The correct use of "a," "an," and "the" is sometimes never mastered.]

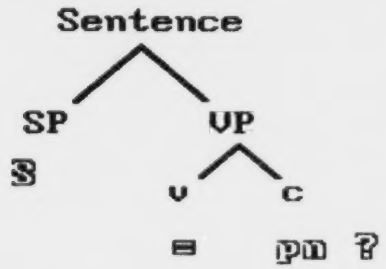
If the preceding are not sufficient reasons for considering the basic sentence pattern as triune, I have one more. It concerns the logic of the sentence patterns, particularly the logic of the S/V/PN pattern. I have often said that students do not need to learn the traditional categories for verbs -- transitive, intransitive, and linking. The only way to determine whether a verb such as "runs" is transitive or intransitive is to examine it within a sentence pattern. All the students really need to know, therefore, are the patterns, and the patterns are easy to learn. If nothing answers the question (verb "what"?) the pattern is S/V. If the word that answers that question is an adjective, then the pattern is S/V/PA. If the word that answers the question is a noun, and the verb in any way indicates an equality between the subject and the complement, then the pattern is S/V/PN. If none of the above is the case, then the pattern is S/V/(IO)DO. This approach to determining the sentence pattern means that the S/V/PN pattern is comparable to a mathematical equation:

S = PN.

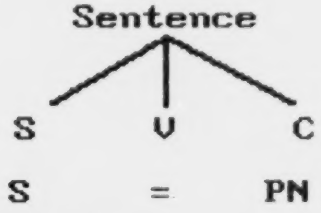
But a transformational tree-diagram for



the basic sentence pattern looks like this:
If we attempt to chart the "equation" of the S/



V/PN pattern on it, we get:
But if we chart the "equation" on the triune



structure, we get:
I humbly suggest that the triune structure is a better representation of the logic underlying the S/V/PN pattern.

There is one additional objection, raised at the conference, that I should address before turning to the second part of my presentation. The concepts that I teach students do not include "expletive 'it'" and "expletive 'there'." **I simply do not see any need for these two concepts.** (KISS) In a sentence such as

There are five men in the room.

I have no objection to students' underlining "men" as the subject and considering "there" as an expletive (although they rarely, if ever, remember the term). On the other hand, I TEACH the construction as: "There" is the subject; "are" is the verb; and "men" is a predicate noun. Since this is an S/V/PN pattern, with its implications of equality, if the complement is plural, so must be the subject -- and the verb. This means that my abandoning the expletive does not leave students without a way of determining proper verb agreement.

The primary objection to my omission of the expletive was that it confuses students: we teach them to find the subject by asking "Who?" or "what?" in front of the verb, and, if we do so in our example, the logical answer would be "men are." The trouble with this objection is that the question often does not work. For example:

"One of the pilgrims came from Dover."

If we ask "who or what came?", the answer is "pilgrims," but "pilgrims is not the subject. It may, in fact, be an over-emphasis on the "Who or what & verb?" question that results in so many of our students making agreement errors by having the verb agree the object of an intervening preposition.

And the problem occurs with more than just prepositional phrases. In analyzing the sentence:

"They visited the town that
was destroyed in the war."

some of my students always tell me that "town" is the subject of "was destroyed." The "who or what & verb?" question is a useful heuristic, but students need to go beyond it. As a result, I cannot view this objection as sufficient enough to warrant retaining the expletives. (I want to emphasize, however, that I never consider the expletive used as an explanation as incorrect.)

My primary reason for eliminating the expletive is simplicity: if a construction or explanation serves no purpose, I believe we should drop it. If anyone can explain why the expletive is indeed necessary, I will be more than happy to reinclude it in my teaching. My willingness to do so brings me to another objection raised at the conference.

In the pages that follow, possessive nouns are treated as adjectives -- that is how they function. But, as John Broderick pointed out, I have a problem there. In considering them solely from the perspective of function, I have no way of dealing with the teaching of the proper use of the apostrophe. This is certainly a valid objection, and all I can

28

respond is that at some point in primary school, students should be taught possessive nouns.

The Sequence of Teaching

Students should learn to analyze sentence structure for a number of reasons, but the most important is that such analysis will help them see how every word in a good sentence has a meaning and function. Each word contributes to the whole, either as part of the nexal pattern, or as a modifier. To teach this effectively, I believe that a) constructions should be taught in a specific order, b) terms and concepts should not be introduced until they are needed, and c) there should be years between the introduction of concepts.

The students' ultimate objective should be the ability to explain how every word in any sentence (except interjections) links to the S/V/C pattern. The easiest way for them to attain this goal is to begin with prepositional phrases. Prepositions are "concrete," in the cognitive sense of the term. Students can simply be given a list of them and be told to place parentheses around the preposition plus whatever answers the question: "Prep & what?" If this teaching is begun early enough, it is relatively simple for the students to master: the writing of fourth graders, for example, rarely includes clauses or verbals as the objects of prepositions. In fact, it includes very few subordinate clauses (thereby alleviating the problem of distinguishing "since" as a preposition and "since" as a subordinate conjunction. In the following passage, written by a fourth grader, the prepositional phrases are in parentheses and smaller type.

Terri (4th grade)

My house is (on a corner.) It has red bricks and white trim. If you go (in the front door) you go (down the hall) and turn left you come (to my brothers room.) If you go straight again and turn right is my room. If you go (across the hall) is a bath-room. Then go straight is my mom and dad room.

Now I'll tell you (about my room,) it is pink and has blue carpet.

I'll tell you (about my brothers room.) It is cream color walls, and brown carpet. He also has a T.V.

My mom and dads room have cream walls and green carpet.

Thats all the bedrooms, now lets go (in the family room,) another bedroom, my dogs room. There is a tv (in that room.) A couch, and a chair.

The kitchen isnt very popular. We eat (in there.) Theres a table and four chairs, a oven, a sink, a re-friderator, and cabnets.

We have a dining room and a living room.

We put our Christmas tree (in the living room.) We have a table, two chairs, and a couch.

We sometimes eat (in the dining room.)

[Reading Level: Grade: 5-3; NPCT:80
Language Skills: Grade: 7-3; NPCT:94]

Terri's passage consists of 193 words, so, for the sake of simplicity, we will say that she needs to make 193 "connections." Since 41 of those words are in prepositional phrases, if she identifies the phrases, we could say that she is 41/193 or 21% of the

way toward her goal. Since prepositional phrases function as adjectives or adverbs, she will, in order to make the final connections, have to learn about modifiers. If she learns how coordinate conjunctions, adjectives, and adverbs function, she will be even further toward her goal:

Words in Prep Phrases	41
CC ("and")	13
Adj. not in Prep Phrases	41
Adverbs	11
Total	**106**

She is now, we might say, in control of 106 of the 193 connections (55%), and she has not even looked at the S/V/C patterns! The text below indicates the words she can account for.

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My house is (on a corner.) It has red bricks and white trim. If you go (in the front door) you go (down the hall) and turn left you come (to my brothers room.) If you go straight again and turn right is my room. If you go (across the hall) is a bathroom. Then go straight is my mom and dad room.

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The kitchen isnt very popular. We eat (in there.) Theres a table and four chairs, a oven, a sink, a refridgerator, and cabnets.

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We put our Christmas tree (in the living room.) We have a table, two chairs, and a couch.

We sometimes eat (in the dining room.)

Next let us suppose that Terri were to study the basic sentence patterns. I might note that I'm not sure that fourth graders are ready for this. I usually suggest that third and fourth grades be devoted to prepositional phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and coordinate conjunctions. Let us therefore assume that Terri has

Terri (4th grade)

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gone on to fifth grade, where she is now analyzing her fourth grade writing. (My usual suggestion is that fifth and sixth grades be devoted to the four variations of the basic sentence pattern.)

In Terri's text, 81 words are in S/V/C slots. If we add these to the 106 previously accounted for, we can say that Terri could explain 187 of the 193 words, or 97% of the connections in her text! The version below indicates the words which would remain unexplained.

Several points need to be made about Terri's projected ability. First, it depends upon a knowledge of very few constructions. Second, it would give her an excellent position from which to improve her writing. Many of the spelling errors in it involve SV contractions ("thats," "theres"). She could also now learn how to control the run-ons and comma-splices. Then there is the fragment: "a couch, and a chair." It would not take much to help Terri see that, since all the other sentences have S/V/C patterns, this phrase, punctuated as a sentence, needs improvement. She might change it to something such as "That room also has a couch and a chair" (thereby accounting for two of the six words that are currently unexplained).

Still another point is that Terri would probably be quite proud of her accomplishment. Instead of considering grammar as a chaotic, confusing mass of rules, she would probably view it as a helpful, clarifying tool. She can, after all, see and explain 97% of the connections in her own text -- and she is only in fifth grade!

The final points concern the words in Terri's text that are still unexplained. One of the four is an infinitive ("let's go"). If I were her teacher, and she asked me what it is, I would tell her, but I would not expect her or her classmates to learn it. The other unexplained words are actually one word, the subordinate conjunction "if." As with the infinitive, I would tell Terri what it is, if she asked, but I would otherwise leave it unexplained. Clause structure is best taught in grades seven, eight, and nine. Rather than studying clauses, Terri should spend her time reading, writing, and revising her writing based on the constructions she already knows.

We can now turn to the writing of Tony, an eighth grader, which we should consider from two different perspectives: 1) what happens if students do not begin their study of grammar before eighth grade, and 2) if Tony had followed the curriculum we have suggested for Terri, what would he now have to learn? What follows is a passage of Tony's writing. As in the first illustration of Terri's, prepositional phrases are in parentheses and have been reduced in size.:

Tony (8th Grade)

As you drive (down the road) there is a creek (on your left) and trees (on your right.) Just as you go (into the campground) there are two bridges (over a fairly large creek.) The creek runs (into the bay.) (At the mouth) (of the creek) you can catch Perch and Spotted Bass. (At the begining) (of the creek) is a large pond where you can catch Trout. And all (through the creek) you can find many species (of turtles.) (At the campground) there are cabins to sleep in (in-

stead of rooms.) (Inside the cabins) there are four rooms. There's a full bathroom, a bedroom, a kitchen, and a small dinning room. The owners (of the campground) are very nice and will do almost anything (for you.) (From the cabin) you can see the bay. The beach is beautiful and the water is clear blue and cool. You can rent boats, waterski's, jet ski's, wind surfing boards, ect. (from the Bayside Bait Box.) You can fish (from the pier) or (from a boat) or even (from the beach.) There are plenty (of things) to do you can go hiking, biking, they even have places where you can go hang-gliding and fly a glider plane. There is an amusement park (with a huge roller coaster) called the terminator. When you leave the campground to go home you wish you could turn around an start all over again.

[Reading NPCT: 60
Lang NPCT: 59]

Seventy-five of the 236 words (32%) are in prepositional phrases. If he had been analyzing prepositional phrases since third grade, he could easily explain these seventy-five words. But if, instead, he were just beginning his study of prepositional phrases, he would have to deal with several complications that do not appear in Terri's text. (Nor, I would suggest, do they appear with any frequency in the writing of most fourth graders.) He uses "as" twice -- as a subordinate conjunction, and he must thus make this distinction. He uses "to" three times as part of an infinitive, and thus must distinguish this "to" from the preposition. (Fourth graders also use the infinitive "to," but less frequently. Note that in this approach, how often a construction appears is crucial. Exceptions to the construction which a student is currently mastering simply cause confusion.) Tony would also have to deal with the verbal tag in "to sleep in." And finally, he might be confused by his penchant for modifying prepositional phrases: "all through the park," "even from the beach," "with a huge roller coaster called the terminator."

What I am suggeting, in other words, is that if Tony has to begin his study of prepositional phrases in eight grade, he will be faced with what we know as cognitive overload -- not only would he have to learn the basic pattern of prepositional phrases (and remember the prepositions), he would have to do so in the context of numerous complications and variations. Much was said at the conference about new information/old information in the context of sentence structure, but I want to suggest an even more important application of the new/old information distinction: students learn best by using new information to refine their old concepts.

Let's continue with Tony's text as we did with Terri's, by considering the coordinate conjunctions, adjectives, and adverbs:

Words in Prep Phrases	75
CC ("and")	11
Adj. not in Prep Phrases	29
Adverbs	6
Total	**121**

If Tony can analyze these constructions, he is 121/236ths (51%) of the way toward the goal. But in eighth grade, having followed our syllabus, Toni can also easily identify S/V/C patterns, and thus the 94 words in his text that fill slots in those patterns. He is actually, therefore, 215/236ths (91%) of the

way toward the goal of being able to explain how every word connects to a basic pattern. In the following illustration, the words that remain to be explained are in large type:

> As you drive (down the road) there is a creek (on your left) and trees (on your right.) Just as you go (into the campground) there are two bridges (over a fairly large creek.) The creek runs (into the bay.) (At the mouth) (of the creek) you can catch Perch and Spotted Bass. (At the begining) (of the creek) is a large pond where you can catch Trout. And all (through the creek) you can find many species (of turtles.) (At the campground) there are cabins to sleep in (instead of rooms.) (Inside the cabins) there are four rooms. There's a full bathroom, a bedroom, a kitchen, and a small dinning room. The owners (of the campground) are very nice and will do almost anything (for you.) (From the cabin) you can see the bay. The beach is beautiful and the water is clear blue and cool. You can rent boats, water-ski's, jet ski's, wind surfing boards, ect. (from the Bayside Bait Box.) You can fish (from the pier) or (from a. boat) or even (from the beach.) There are plenty (of things) to do you can go hiking, biking, they even have places where you can go hang-gliding and fly a glider plane. There is an amusement park (with a huge roller coaster) called the terminator. When you leave the campground to go home you wish you could turn around an start all over again.

Of the 21 words that remain to be explained, five are subordinate conjunctions ("as" twice, "where" twice, and "when"). I have often suggested that students study clause structure in 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. As an eighth grader in my suggested curriculum, Tony would thus probably not have major problems with the subordinate clauses in his writing, all of which are fairly simple. He would probably have little trouble in understanding his use of "just" as an adverbial modifier of his adverbial clause. The same can be said about his use of "even" as an adverbial modifier of the phrase "from the beach." His "all through the creek" might provide a topic for some interesting discussion (through all the creek?) But however he deals with it, it will not result in his believing that grammar is total confusion (as it is for so many students who have not been systematically introduced to it).

We are now down to thirteen words unaccounted for, one of which is the "in" in the infinitive phrase "to sleep in." Linguists find great complications in these verbal tags, but I don't, nor has any of my students. Tony might be curious about it, or he might prefer to ignore it, other than noting that it obviously connects to "sleep." Discussions about these verbal tags can be interesting, but they can also be long, so I must forego it here.

Twelve words now remain, six of which are in infinitive phrases ("to sleep," "to do," and "to go"). Although I usually suggest that verbals (infinitives, gerunds, and gerundives) be taught in tenth grade, it would not at all surprise me, if my suggested curriculum is ever put to a test, to find students mastering infinitives on their own and well before tenth grade. There is always a student in the class who will want to know what the thing is. As noted previously, my response is "It's an infinitive. You'll study those later." But the students don't wait. The next time an infinitive appears and the question arises, a student usually answers the question. If the students have been studying passages from their own

33

and their peers' writing since third grade, they will have seen a good number of infinitives. Nor will they have trouble figuring out for themselves that infinitives function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

We are down to six words, one of which ("home") is a noun used as an adverb. Another three ("hiking," "biking," and "hang-gliding") are gerunds used as adverbs. (For a longer discussion of this construction, see Vol 8, No.3 of Syntax in the Schools.) The final two ("called" and "terminator") are a gerundive and a retained object.

I have discussed the infinitives, the noun and gerunds used as adverbs, the gerundive and the retained object not because I would teach them to eighth graders, but because I want to suggest that they themselves form patterns (three infinitives, three gerunds as adverbs) and to emphasize that these twelve words constitute a relatively insignificant part (5%) of the total text My experience has been that students do not mind the unexplained, as long as they can see for themselves that they are making progress. Tony's attention, in other words, should not be focussed on these unexplained words, but rather on clauses, and the various ways he could use them to affect the style and clarity of his writing. Once he has mastered clauses, then he and his classmates can turn to verbals (in tenth grade?) and then, finally, to the other constructions on my list.

A Change in Perspective

The approach I have been suggesting requires a major change in perspective on the part of teachers. To demonstrate this, I saved an objection to my presentation (raised at the conference) until now. My example for delayed subjects, I was told, is too complex: students would not be able to locate the delayed subject. From a traditional perspective, the point is well-made. But in a traditional curriculum, students never master anything. That is why we have to teach the parts of speech every year, from primary school through college.

But in this approach, things would be significantly different. As one of the "Other" constructions, the delayed subject would not be taught until after students had mastered verbals. Within the framework I have been suggesting here, that means they would study these "other" constructions in eleventh grade, as a culmination of eight years of previous study. To see what students would do, we can look at my example in more detail. It is:

James wanted to know if it
is easy to ride a motorcycle.

In this approach, sentences are always analyzed in a set sequence: prepositional phrases are dealt with first, then S/V/C's, then clauses, then verbals. Only after that should a student be concerned with "other" constructions.

There are no prepositional phrases in the sentence, so students would immediately move on to the S/V/C patterns. They would also be very accustomed to dealing with infinitives, so they would have no trouble with "to know" as the DO of "wanted." Having been analyzing clauses since seventh grade, they would have no trouble recognizing the "if" clause as the DO of the infinitive "to know." Although they would not know how "to ride" functions, they would recognize it as an infinitive, and they would know that it goes with the "it is easy" pattern, not with "James wanted to know." They would also have no trouble with "motorcycle" as the DO of "to ride." In other words, the only thing in this sentence that students would not be able to explain is the function of the infinitive "to ride."

I should note here that the way I teach these "other" constructions is to give students all of them at one time, to give them brief definitions and examples of each, and then to give them selected sentences which contain

them. This is an exception to my normal procedure of using complete texts as exercises, but the fact is that these constructions are relatively rare: if one uses complete texts, students find themselves analyzing many sentences that do not contain ANY of these constructions.

What the students do is to analyze the sentences, and when they come to a construction which they cannot explain, they turn to their notes and handouts on the "others." In the case of "to ride," students would quickly see that it is not an appositive, a noun used as an adverb, a noun absolute, a retained complement, an interjection, or direct address. The only thing it can be is a delayed subject, and, with the "it" in the "it is easy," the "to ride" clearly fits this pattern: to ride a motorcycle is easy.

The main problem in explaining this approach is in getting listeners and readers to change their perspective. Instead of looking at grammar from an English teacher's or a linguist's perspective, we need to approach pedagogical grammar from the students' perspective. Perhaps my biggest complaint is against the traditionalists, who continue to teach useless definitions, simply because they believe the explanations have explanatory power. But often they do not. To define a main clause as a clause that can stand alone is to define "He is hungry" as a main clause. But in "She said, 'He is hungry'." it is no such thing. Students thus learn the definition, and then learn that it does not work. Is it any wonder that they hate grammar? Why do they need to memorize lists of transitive, intransitive and linking verbs, lists that they never use?

But if the traditionalists are terrible, the "pedagogical" linguists also should be faulted. Structural, transformational, and most of the other grammars have their uses, but do they belong in K-12 classrooms? I do not claim to be an expert on all of these grammars, but I am somewhat familiar with most of them, and I am fairly familiar with both structural and transformational. All of the "pedigogical" linguistic grammars I have seen fail, primarily because they make the linguistic theory, not the English language, their focus.

Structural grammars were developed to study and preserve the languages of American Indians, languages that were quickly disappearing. Because the people who developed and used these grammars often did not understand the languages they were studying, the underlying principles of the grammars were totally divorced from meaning.

The divorce from meaning is illustrated in Paul Roberts' structural textbook, Understanding English. Since reliance on meaning is a "no-no" in structural grammar, Roberts spends half a page (149?) trying to determine whether "moving" is a regular adjective or a verbal in the phrase "moving van." Does anybody care? Immediate constituent analysis (the breaking of a sentence into two parts, and each part into two parts, etc.), combined with no relaince on meaning, then led Roberts to conclude that "grew" in the sentence "The boys grew tall" is an adjective modifying the verb "grew" (199). Does this really help students?

Although structural grammars are not successful in the classroom, numerous textbooks were based on them. There are far fewer attempts to import transformational grammars into pedagogy, for the simple reason that TG's are so complex. To deal with interrogatives, for example, one needs half a page of phrase structure rules, and then half a page of transformational rules. Next come the morphophonemic rules. Then, when one has finally completed the process, one must turn to a native speaker and ask if the generated sentence is acceptable! Since every child in kindergarten is fully capable of asking questions, can there be any possible justifications for bringing all these rules into the classroom?

I do not mean to suggest that transformational principles are unimportant. "Kernel

sentences," "deep structure," "surface structure," "deletion" and "embedding" are very helpful concepts in understanding how sentences work. But these concepts can be applied using the terminology listed at the beginning of this article. As as brief example of how this can be done, let's look at a short sentence which appeared in a paper my students analyzed this semester:

We put on our coats . . . .

Several of my students, their minds unengaged, marked "on our coats" as a prepositional phrase. This evoked my question, "What does it mean?" ("What is the deep structure?) Well, it means "we put our coats on our bodies." But when we write or say it (surface structure), we ellipse (delete) the object of "on" because it is obviously understood.

The transformational concepts of deletion and embedding are even more important when we discuss the natural syntactic development (within the brain). The younger child writes: "Suzie played ball, and Sandy played ball." The older child writes: "Suzie and Sandy played ball," deleting the repetitious "played ball" and embedding the new information in the second main clause into the first. The concepts, in other words, help students understand how their mastery of English has grown, but the students do not need the theoretical transformational rules which explain the details of how such transformations are performed. The studends have many more important things to do (such as read and write).

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[Note: The research by Hunt, Loban and O'Donnell, cited above, is crucial for anyone interested in developing a grammatical component of an English curriculum for K-12. Unlike the comparative studies of later researchers, these men simply analyzed the writing of students in different grade levels. Their results are one of my major justifications for saying such things as that subordinate clauses should be taught in grades seven through nine, and that verbals and appositives should be taught only after students master clauses.]

The Parts Are the Key to the Whole: The Importance of the Parts of Speech

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Let us assume that you were ill and, therefore, could not work; subsequently, you return to work and are asked by your co-workers, "How do you feel?" Do you respond, "I feel good" or "I feel well?" The wrongly-formal will insist that the correct response is "I feel well" when, in fact, very few of them would respond, conversely, "I feel badly after my illness." The fact is that the response to how one feels after an illness (or after any traumatic experience, whether physical or emotional) is adjectival, not adverbial, because the question being asked is actually, "What is your condition?", and, certainly, no one would respond, "My condition is well!" The fact is that, as a modifier, "well" is always an adverb and never an adjective. To prove this, all we need to do is to cite its antonym in a conventionally-accepted erroneous use of "well." Would those who say, stiltedly, "I hope that you are well," say to someone they dislike, "I hope that you are badly?" One "feels well" only when one's fingertips and toes are experiencing optimal sensation; thus, after surgery performed upon his fingertips to alter his fingerprints, a literate Mafioso might well - yes, "well" - respond correctly to the question, "How do you feel after your surgery?" with the statement, "My fingers hoit (sic), but I feel well!"

It is my hope that, during the brief time allotted to me, I can convince at least some of you that teaching the parts of speech is an excellent foundation for courses in composition and that, concomitantly, knowing the contextual functions and limitations of the parts of speech is a compelling basis for coherent oral and written communication. Conversely, I hope to convince you that, of course, contextually-violated or falsely-rendered parts of speech lead to incoherence, illiteracy and, often, ludicrousness.

Perhaps we can consider adjectives and adverbs as actors. The adjective is a star; it is prominent, but singularly limited in its capacities; it can modify only nouns and pronouns. Once a communicator - the director, in this metaphor - attempts to diversify the functions of this limited performer, chaos and a bad production result. The adverb, on the other hand, is a versatile character actor; it is capable of much greater range, and it displays its versatility by modifying not only verbs, but also adjectives, other adverbs, phrases, clauses, and entire sentences! Let us see what happens when crass directors coerce adjectives into roles that only adverbs can play.

If a cop ever detains you for "driving drunk", simply tell him that he is charging you with an impossibility. "To drive" is a verb, requiring an adverb to modify it. "Drunk" is a noun, an adjective, or a verb; it is never an adverb. Therefore, it is literally impossible to "drive drunk". If he accuses you of "driving drunkenly", simply congratulate him for his correct use of English and "pay the $5."

Do you, at this point, want to "take it easy" and "play it safe" because you are "running scared?" Good luck doing the impossible.

Elvis Presley pleaded, "Love me tender, love me true;" unless he was beseeching two women named "Tender" and "True", he was clearly never satisfied in his impossible entreaties. Many popular songs declaim "Hold me close" or "Hold me tight", while the popular expression suggests that one "sleep tight"; I hope - for the sake of sanity - that entities named "Close" and "Tight" are being thus addressed. (Perhaps the entity named "Tight" is being told to sleep because he has been so busy all day adhering to the dictum to "Hold me, Tight!") Many speakers and singers declare "I love you so bad;" the response to this is, of course, "You love me badly, and you proved it last night!"

The words "a/"an" are, of course, the indefinite articles; as such, they are adjectives. The word "little" is exclusively an adjective. How, then, can these two adjectives combine to become an adverbial phrase when, in fact, a phrase such as, "I am a little tired," is an incomplete idea waiting for a noun to complete it by giving the adjectives "a", "little", and "tired" their modifyee, if I may coin a noun. The use of "a little" as an adverbial phrase is not only impossible, but it is sometimes laughable, ineluctably rendering the last word of the sentence in which it is used a noun, as in, for example, "I am a little behind," and "Let us eat a little Mexican!" If you want more proof of the indefensibility of "a little" as an adverbial phrase, simply put a synonym of "little" into the context; you will then have created the inane impossibility of "I am a small tired" while retaining the very real validity that you are "a small behind!"

An Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at a major university once said to me, "We are real aware of grammar at this institution!" One dreads to imagine how she would speak were she only false aware of it! Try as one might, she cannot distort adjectives into adverbial functioning. It is "pretty clear" (sic) that it is "mighty important" (sic) to use modifiers "real carefully" (sic)!

One of the most popular movies of recent years was Walking Tall. This must have been a work of science fiction in which various people of athletic and acrobatic proclivities attempted to "walk tall"; they all failed, no doubt, because it is literally impossible to modify a verb (or a verb form) with an adjective. Anyway, they must have been so exhausted after attempting to "walk tall" that they subsequently collapsed into chairs and proceeded to "sit short" or fell to the ground and found themselves "lying even shorter"!

Let us talk about the noun. The noun is so important and so popular a part of speech that some people think that it can readily become any part of speech and that any part of speech can easily become it! For example, that self-admittedly impeccable communicator Howard Cossell was fond of declaiming on Monday Night Football that a given player had made the "intercept", thereby contorting a verb into a noun! This makes one wonder whether Howard would caution a sexually-active person to use a viable means of "contracept"! The execrable contemporary expression "user friendly" makes the noun an adverb while it makes any sane linguist "perceiver disgusted"!

But perhaps the most cruel and indefensible treatment to which some nouns are subjected is their impossible distortion into attributive nouns, i.e., de facto adjectives. Of course, there are innumerable examples of valid, even necessary uses of attributive nouns, for example "telephone pole" and "baby carriage." But the singular constitu-

tions of some nouns simply cannot tolerate the rigorous adjectival transformation. Let us take the word "quality." It is doubly damned and defeated as an attributive noun. First, "quality" is not a guarantee of excellence, since there exist varying levels of quality. Second, even if "quality" were most liberally deemed a synonym of "excellence," no coherent communicator would declare that Mahatma Gandhi was an "excellence" person! To declare that something is a "quality" entity is to intimate that the declarer is an idiocy communicator!

For many years, the New York Times Magazine has featured what it calls "Luxury Homes and Estates." Incredible! Think of some synonyms of luxury: "elegance," "opulence," "grandeur." Would anyone ever speak of "elegance homes," "opulence estates," or "grandeur liners?" Certainly not, because, of course, the adjectives "luxurious," "elegant," "opulent," and "grand" are ready and eager to perform their proper functions and save their beleaguered noun compatriots from grotesque distortion!

"Gourmet food!" How can food be "gourmet?" If food is "gourmet," it might as well be "gourmand" food or "epicure" food! We might as well "go the whole hog" - to use a "food idiom" - and call it "chef food" which, of course, is far superior to mere "cook food!"

Are you having a "fun" time? That is good; unfortunately that is the equivalent of having an "amusement" time which, of course, is impossible.

During the past several years, we have all heard and read the following tag line of advertisements: "Available at area locations." This patent inanity results in the following hilarious redundancy when we use a most appropriate synonym of the noun "area": "Available at location locations!"

I am sure that you get the idea. Words, like people, function best in their own domains and should not, in a democracy, be coerced to function in realms that are beyond them.

Let us leave nouns with the understanding that we will not force them to be adjectives - when that is unwarranted and patently impossible, that we will never coerce them to be verbs and adverbs, and that we will never contort other parts of speech into nouns. I "suspicion" (sic) that my passionate tirade has "impacted" (sic) you compellingly.

Perhaps the only agreement among grammarians vis-a-vis the parts of speech is that there are eight of them. But wait! Some supposed experts maintain that there exists a ninth part of speech, the dreaded, so-called "verb tail" that is used in such phrases as "sum up," "rein in," and "find out!" To these charlatans, I say simply, "Come on."

Given my temporal constriction, allow me to say just the following few things about the verb: One, teachers of English must make their students aware of the difference between transitive and intransitive verbs so that we can avoid such monstrosities as "Are you home?" and "We're talking big bucks here." Two, irrespective of the most assiduous efforts of the most subliterate, "loan" was not, is not, and never will be a verb! Three, splitting the infinitive - like dangling a preposition, about which I will talk later - violates the structural beauty and the inherent coherence of a fundamentally sound aspect of the English language and, therefore, should be abhorrent to all lovers of said language. Four, who here has ever had contractions? Not pleasant, are they? Why, then, do presumedly literate people contract the verb, which is the most important part of speech? How have we reached a state of affairs that dictates that four-fifths of the helping verb "would" are replaced by an apostrophe and the following

monstrosities result: "I'd," "you'd," "we'd," "they'd," "he'd," "she'd," and "it'd!" I call these abominations "constipated contractions," because they literally constipate the linguistic process. Please, let us cleanse our beloved English of constipated contractions. Wouldn't you like that? I'd.

There is the story (possibly apocryphal) of Winston Churchill's desire to illustrate the presumable pettiness of attempting to avoid the dangling preposition. He manifested this desire - so it is told - by creating the following convoluted construction: "That is a situation up with which I will not put." If he did, in fact, formulate this tortuous sentence, he did, indeed, albeit unknowingly, serve the cause of those linguists who abominate the dangling preposition because, even if the sentence is restructured in order to let the preposition dangle "naturally," (sic) it nevertheless remains an abominable sentence: "That is a situation I will not put up with." Had Mr. Churchill chosen to display genuine erudition, he would have declared that the only logical, coherent and correct way to state the idea that he was trying to formulate is to say, "That is a situation that I will not tolerate."

Let us never fail to remember that the word itself - "preposition" - means "in a position before something," that "something" being, of course, the rest of the prepositional phrase.

The redoubtable Diana Ross dangled a preposition grotesquely in her hit song, "Where Are You Going to?", in which case, of course, the preposition is not only dangling but superfluous.

The preposition is an excellent teaching tool for the parts of speech, because it interacts with and is related to other parts of speech; specifically, it precedes objective and reflexive pronouns, it can become a noun or an adverb if its context is altered, and it is often confused, as I shall illustrate, even by some learned individuals, with the adverbial conjunction.

The chairperson of the Department of Communications at a major university once said to me, "This is strictly between you and I!" Then, as I was leaving her office, she reiterated, "Don't forget; this is just between you and I." She made the old mistake of the falsely learned and the falsely formal that is reinforced during childhood. When a child is learning English, she might well, at first, say, "Me and Bobby are going to play." The well-intentioned but poorly-informed parent or teacher, upon hearing this, rejoins, "No, dear, that's 'Bobby and I.' 'Me' is a bad word." So the child develops believing that "me" is a bad word and, when the time comes for the use of the objective pronoun, the former child reverts to the dutiful child and says, "between you and I."

The chairperson of the Department of English at a college in New York once told me that he had a radio program involving grammar and that, on a given occasion, his guests preceded him to the studio or, as he put it, "They arrived before me." I diplomatically suggested to him that if he had not seen them arrive - as, indeed he had not, - the word "before" could not be regarded, contextually, as a preposition but was, rather, an adverbial conjunction requiring the nominative pronoun "I", because what he was, in fact, saying was, "They arrived before I arrived" or "They arrived before I did." He replied that I was technically correct, but that he was being informal and liberal in his usage. What hope is there for contextual correctness of the parts of speech when a chairman of English rationalizes his irrational syntax after him is reminded that him is wrong?

The words "outside" and "inside" are chameleons; they can be either prepositions or

nouns, depending, of course, upon context. The problem is that, when they are nouns, they are frequently - and logically - followed by the preposition "of"; however, as prepositions, they cannot be followed by "of". So, for example, while we can say, "The outside of my house needs painting," it is grammatically gross to declare, "Wait for me outside of the house."

In fact, I contend that the only two prepositions that can be linked as a legitimate phrase constitute the well-known and often-used combination "out of". Other such combinations are ill-advised and im-possible (sic). For example, think of the vulgarity that is the combination "off of". And then there is the oddity "in between", as in, "I have traveled from China to France and everywhere in between." Do people not realize that the idea of "in-ness" is already in the word "between" and that the preposition "between" needs an object and that, therefore, the sentence must be recast as, "I have traveled from China to France and everywhere between them?"

The simple preposition "between" is problematic for many people in two other ways: First, some sportscasters - who are, of course, as deleterious to English as termites are to wooden structures - somehow construe "between" and "through" as synonyms and, therefore, make such laughable assertions as, "The ball went through the fielder's legs," which intimates that the ball was - literally - hit like a bullet and, consequently, penetrated both of the feckless fielder's lamentable legs! Second, one of the English teachers in my department circulated a handout that was entitled, "The Difference between Prose, Poetry, and Drama!" Just among we, (sic) do you think that she is a viable English teacher?

Mercifully, this tirade about the abuses committed against prepositions is now "over". (sic) Gee, and it seems not so long ago that it began, or, to use the complementarily idiotic structure, it seems not long ago that it was "under"!

Lest you think that I have just unloosed a torrential train of linguistic trivia, let me quickly disabuse you of that notion. Rather than being a litany of nit-picking, this presentation is, in fact, quite the opposite: it is a call to logic, to lucidity, to logical, coherent interaction via the only means available to man - via his use of language.

Let me leave you with two examples of the abuse that English suffers when the parts of speech are violated; these two examples come from the wrongly-revered New York Times, the publication that gave us the unforgettable "Luxury Homes and Estates." First, let me quote to you from the late Anatole Broyard, once an editor of The New York Times Book Review; in a column entitled, "Keep Your Compassion, Give Me Your Madness" in the issue of said review of June 21, 1987, he wrote the following: "My favorite image of the novelist comes from a comic strip about a couple named Dagwood and Blondie. Getting ready to brush his teeth one night, Dagwood finds that they are out of toothpaste." Broyard wrongly construes the singular phrase "a couple" as plural and, accordingly, falsely uses the plural pronoun "they" to refer to said phrase. Additionally, he uses the idiotic idiom "to be out of" as a substitute for the simple infinitive verb phrase "to lack". The result is that he is saying, in effect, "Dagwood finds that his teeth are out of toothpaste," because "teeth" is the only operative plural antecedent to "they"! This gives the reader the wonderfully surreal image of teeth popping, or dancing, or marching "out of" toothpaste.

Staying with the Sunday Times, we come at last to the language-related column in the New York Times Magazine by William Safire. He has - by his own printed admis-

sion - been wrong so often in said column that I have come to call him "Willing Misfire," because he does not seem to be able to learn from his own mistakes. He might have been immediately aware of his unsuitability to deal with English by the very title that he gave to his column; he called it - and still calls it - "On Language." He is using the wrong preposition. Irrespective of descriptive dictionaries, "on" is not a synonym of "concerning," "regarding," or "about", as can be easily demonstrated by reference to the popular film starring Bette Davis and Anne Baxter; surely, no one - in accordance with Misfire's usage - would want to call it "All On Eve". I suggest to you that "on" is not a synonym of "about," that the column should be called "About" - or "Regarding" or "Concerning" - "Language", and that someone who does not misfire should write said column.

And I suggest to you finally that unless we respect the parts of speech and use them contextually correctly, we have chaos, incoherence, and countercommunication. And it is our job as teachers and writers of our beloved English language to protect the parts of speech from mutilation and to promote their proper utilization.

I thank you in advance for your approbation, and I warn you to be "about" your toes (sic) if you choose to challenge me "on" (sic) anything that I have said here today.

Good at Grammar

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I once asked my wife whether she would still love me if I weren't good at grammar. Hearing the question, she paused rather longer than I thought polite. When she finally spoke, she seemed to be choosing her words carefully. "Well," she said. "If you weren't good at grammar, you wouldn't be you, would you?" "Oh," I said. "Slightly circular answer, don't you think?"

I imagined a personals column. "SWF seeks companion for proper syntactic relationship. Must be GAG and able to prove it."

Fortunately, I'm good enough at grammar to get by. I confess I share her opinion, and I'm glad to say she is also "gag." I even teach a course whose major goal is to makes writers gag--that is good at grammar.

Grammar and the Bi-Modal Curve

The official title of my course is Applied Grammar and Usage for Writers. Each year as I prepare for the course I ask myself whether grammar is worth all the trouble I take with it. Each year, my practical self tells me no, it isn't. All the research tells me, not, it isn't. I try to rationalize that traditional grammar is worth knowing for its own sake, but logic tells me that if people should have to learn traditional grammar then they should also have to learn eighteenth century physics. Both have been superseded by systems much more descriptive of the facts of phenomena.

Grammar really shouldn't matter to me. It wouldn't matter to me if it were like the alphabet, something that almost everyone could learn. It wouldn't matter if it were like history or economics or literature, each of which produces a bell curve of achievement. Nor would it matter if I could categorize it with calculus, symbolic logic and computer programming, as part of an abstract system useful only to a small group and safely ignored by most other people.

Yet each autumn I face another class, and it does matter even though I feel a sense of predestination as I scan the roster. I know the students will fall into three categories: good writers who are only fair at grammar, middling writers who are good at grammar, and a few Grammarphobes who are making one last attempt to get past their terror. And I know how it's going to come out.

I have taught my grammar for writers course foe eight years changing my syllabus each year and using every resource I can think of--

- language readers,
- college grammars based on traditional, structural, and transformational approaches,
- usage textbooks,
- xeroxed packets of materials on style and the history of grammar and usage,
- weekly factual tests on usage,
- midterm and final tests with questions I write and questions the class writes,
- traditional grammar exercises,
- oral presentations by individual class members on points of grammar and usage,
- library research projects on grammar and usage by groups of class members,
- multiple choice tests written in imitation of the ACT by groups of class

members,
reading journals with individual conferences about traditional grammar,
literary analysis using grammatical methods, and
practical writing exercises using functional sentence perspective to achieve stylistic clarity.

When I evaluate the effects of my ministrations, I use performance oriented tests, which I prefer to multiple choice exams. In my opinion to be good at grammar is to be able to use grammar for something, for example, to analyze literature. Someone who can unpack the syntax of the heavily embedded and elliptical speech of literary discourse clearly is good at grammar in a way that makes him or her capable of appreciating the aesthetic dimensions of literature as a musician appreciates the ability of a composer.

I know on the first day of the term that my final exam will resolve the initial three groups -- the good grammar students, the middling grammar students and the grammarphobes -- into two groups. Statistically speaking, my class will fall into a bi-modal distribution. Practically speaking, Some people will get it, and some won't.

For years, I have walked away from the last day of class talking to myself. "I don't think I teach grammar. I think that some people know it, and I give them the opportunity to prove it. Others don't know it, and I give them the opportunity to prove that."

I ask myself, "If practicality, logic and empirical research suggest that teaching grammar produces little effect and few practical benefits, why bother?"

Grammar as Epiphany

Why?

Since I seem unable to leave grammar alone, I've decided to think of it as one of those basic mythic questions we ask about experience. Is the theory of evolution true? Where was the Garden of Eden located? Is there such a thing as genius, or female language, or God?

Science cannot satisfactorily answer questions such as these because they are not questions about facts or theories. They are questions about the phenomenology of experience. When I wonder whey someone is good at grammar and someone else is not, I'm really asking what it feels like to be inside the skin of someone engaged in the process of perceiving sentence structure or learning to perceive sentence structure.

The experience of perceiving syntax is interesting for two reasons. First grammar is a paradigm case of problem-solving. Rather like chess or other games, it requires a combination of algorithmic and heuristic modes of thought. Traditional grammar is systematic enough to be tantalizing but it refuses to resolve itself into the algorithmic tidiness of trigonometry or symbolic logic or transformational grammar. It remains intuitive, requiring the learner to engage in a focused kind of flexible thinking, shifting the ground of reference from form to function, seeing the same labels at various levels of generality, resorting to meaning to help sort out questions of form.

More importantly, grammar is interesting because it is a paradigm case of intuitive learning, that is of learning by flashes of insight. It seems to me that, like Tennyson's flower in the crannied wall, traditional grammar embodies basic problems and processes of learning, and to understand thoroughly how people succeed and fail with grammar would tell me everything I want to know about the sort of learning that operates by epiphanies, moments of insight in which you seem to suddenly get it.

I remember exactly when I got it. I was in Mr. Golden's seventh grade English class. One day we began a perfectly wonderful series of exercises in sentence diagramming. As soon as Mr. Golden began drawing the

diagrams on the board I could see the parts into which the sentences fell -- subjects and predicates, clauses and phrases, modification and complementation, so forth and so on. I began filling out the exercises, but it was, as Eliot writes, as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen, as if I were merely connecting the dots for lines that were already implicit in the sentences. I just looked and there the units were.

What happened to make it click for me? I can rule some things out.

It couldn't have been a careful sequence of educational experiences. Between first and seventh grades, I lived in five towns in three states and changed elementary schools six times. It couldn't have been foreign language study. I didn't take German until my junior year in high school.

I don't think it was Mr. Golden. He made a few perfunctory explanations and went to his desk to read time magazine while we did our homework in class. It could have been my mother but I don;t think so. She speaks scrupulously Standard English and thinks of herself as a strict grammarian, but she's mainly interested in usage facts such as whether you pronounce the L sound in palm (you don't). I'm sure she never helped me with my grammar homework for two reasons. First we always raced to finish the homework in class, and second my mother didn't help with any of my homework. I don't think you can make a good case for a relationship between my mother's standard dialect and the parsing ability that simply appeared in me when I was in the seventh grade. My mother's standard dialect was counterbalanced by the non-standard dialects of my father and most of my friends, with whom I spent most of my time.

What I'm saying is that at age twelve, I could just do it. Here are the likely causes I can think of.

It could have been IQ. We know that's a circular answer, but it is still an answer. In the sixth grade I had gotten a perfect score on the Stanford Binet. I always score comfortably above the ninety-ninth percentile on any nationally normed test that is based on language. It may be that IQ tests and grammar exercises tap a similar kind of language-based problem solving ability. I cannot believe in that answer because it seems to me that IQ, whatever it is, manifests itself in the ability to use intellectual brute strength rather than the subtlety of dexterity which achieves insight. My construct of IQ is probably based on a cybernetic analogy I picked up reading about artificial intelligence. In the computer world, there are two basic approaches to problem solving. If we take the example of the problem of building a chess computer (a project called "Deep Thought" currently under development at IBM's Thomas Watson Research Center at Yorktown Heights, New York), we can appreciate the difference. If we wanted to defeat the human chess champion, we could take an expert systems approach: read all the chess books and interview all the chess champions to define strategies and then program them in. Or we could take an engineering approach: simply redesign computer chips to increase processing speed -- build a smarter computer. The second approach is the way I think IQ works. The machine simply operates faster. Given enough time, most people could achieve perfect scores on IQ tests. If we think of IQ in terms of speed of processing, we must eliminate it as the primary causal factor in the perception of grammar. People experience traditional grammar instruction from the early grades onward, yet they manage to arrive at college unable to count the number of clauses in a paragraph. I may have met a lot of extraordinarily slow students over the years, but it seems to me that anyone exposed to ten years of instruction in the concept of clause would have to be resisting instruction not to learn it.

While I'm offering circular answers I might as well mention motivation. Because of my voracious appetite for stories, I would

read literature texts the first week of class, so I had a history of success and positive feelings in English. Stories and grammar can't have offered the same kind of motivation though. Parsing sentences resembles algebra more than it resembles stories. I never felt the urge to swallow an algebra book whole.

It could have been my reading background. By the seventh grade, I was reading from ten to fifteen books a week, science fiction novels mainly. Perhaps the syntactic categories were simply infused into my language processing mechanisms. Again reading is a circular answer. Being good at grammar and good at reading could well be the effects of some third cause. We must also acknowledge the objection that traditional grammar is a basically latinate system imposed on English from the outside rather than derived from the inside. We might speculate that by reading we learn punctuation, and punctuation contributes to the click of recognition. English punctuation often operates analytically in a way reminiscent of sentence diagramming. We use commas, semi-colons, colons, and periods to draw lines separating phrases and clauses. This explanation neglects confounding factors such as the fact that at the conscious level we look through language to meaning unless we have resolved to concentrate particularly on language and the fact that punctuation is never perfectly systematic. Of course punctuation varies from one writer to the next, so if we hypothesize that people learn grammar from reading, we must also hypothesize that the unconscious perceives the general tendencies implicit in punctuation and then supplies the click of recognition.

I see no particular problem with a belief that the unconscious sorts the issues out for us since so much of language acquisition in general seems to be unconscious. Still, if the process of acquiring traditional grammar operates in the same way as other language acquisition, what accounts for the all-at-once-ness of the experience? Children's language acquisition processes are fast, but they don't work like epiphanies. They're more reminiscent of someone pursuing a passion, following an interest to absorb all the details.

What I remember from that twelve-year-old experience is a moment of perception. I looked at the sentences and my perceptions were changed, instantaneously and irrevocably.

A Test of Language Epiphanies

Since all the answers seem circular, perhaps it is reasonable to conclude that circularity is a necessary quality of the right answer to this question. Consider optical illusions such as the familiar optical image of the lady. Often found in psychology textbooks, this image is a line drawing which appears to some people to be a young woman with a feather in her hat, while others see an old crone with a long nose.

This perceptual exercise feels like what getting grammar felt like to me. The figures emerge from the ground by means of a few details. The line which forms a closeup of the old woman's nose forms a more distant view of the young woman's jaw, cheek, and eye. You have to be able to adjust your focal length to be able to shift back and forth from perceiving the one and the other. I don't think it's possible to perceive both with absolute simultaneity. The picture appears intuitively, associatively when you shift to a just-right angle. Most people have to be told that there are two women in the picture. If you perceive one woman you have no particular reason to look for another one.

Once you have perceived both women you have developed a skill and can shift back and forth. But something made you see one woman before the other one, and the chances are that you'll continue to see the young woman first or the old woman first.

When I first got grammar, I could see the figure of syntactic structure emerging from the ground of the sentences on the page

as if it were a dream image emerging from the unconscious. A dream lays the day's events against a lifetime of images, and the dream, like a theory, acquires vividness and force to the degree that it orders significant events in meaningful ways. My teacher showed me the patterns in some information I possessed, and it suddenly acquired a reality.

Consider this verbal image. As you read through it, punctuate it.

The brain is wider than the sky for place them side by side the one the other will contain with ease and you beside the brain is deeper than the sea for hold them blue to blue the one the other will absorb as sponges buckets do the brain is just the weight of God for heft them pound for pound and they will differ if they do as syllable from sound.

I eliminated the punctuation because punctuation brings out the structure in language. As you were reading, you may have stumbled a few times, but eventually, you were able to formulate the language into syntactic structures. Your perception of appropriate punctuation probably differs from mine.

In the version which follows, I have introduced punctuation. Note that it hints at the underlying syntactic structure, but also note that when you read, you begin to divert your attention to the sense of the passage, which operates by some fanciful metaphors. If you have found the passage puzzling, you may experience an epiphany as you read.

The brain is wider than the sky, for place them side by side, the one the other will contain with ease and you beside. The brain is deeper than the sea, for hold them blue to blue, the one the other will absorb as sponges buckets do. The brain is just the weight of God, for heft them pound for pound, and they will differ, if they do, as syllable from sound.

Since the phrasing is elliptical and the word choices are odd, the punctuation may help a great deal, but unless you have read this before, the punctuation probably does not create a blinding flash of insight. I tell students that it is lazy to punctuate for clarity (put a comma where a reader might stumble). If a sentence can be improved by punctuation, there is more wrong with it than punctuation.

Gertrude Stein observed that some punctuations were interesting and some were not. One of the more interesting forms of punctuation is the line break. If you are not familiar with the passage, how would it affect your perception to be told that the passage is poetry? Take another look at the passage and note what you see now.

The brain is wider than the sky
For place them side by side
The one the other will contain
With ease and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea
For hold them blue to blue.
The one the other will absorb
As sponges buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God
For heft them pound for pound
And they will differ if they do
As syllable from sound.

What is interesting about this punctuation is that it parses the sentences into units which foreground some new linguistic facts --phonological ones. You perceive four line units, a rhyme structure, and a simple rhythm in which four-beat lines alternate with three beats. We seem to have progressed quite naturally from an undifferentiated block of text to punctuated prose to poetry. At each step we transcended the perceptions of the previous step, moving from a simple perception of sentence boundaries to a consciousness of metaphor to a sensation of rhythm. We might wonder if we have progressed from theory to meta-theory to meta-meta-theory.

But we can take the transcendence another step. Here is the poem as it is anthologized (The Norton Anthology of Poetry, 851).

> The Brain -- is wider than the Sky --
> For -- put them side by side --
> The one the other will contain
> With ease -- and You -- beside --
>
> The Brain is deeper than the sea --
> For -- hold them -- Blue to Blue --
> The one the other will absorb --
> As Sponges -- Buckets do
>
> The Brain is just the weight of God --
> For -- Heft them -- Pound for Pound --
> And they will differ -- if they do --
> As Syllable from Sound --

Anyone familiar with the work of Emily Dickinson will recognize her idiosyncratic use of dashes, probably a form of musical notation which counterpoints the simple four-three rhythm she borrowed from the hymnal of her New England church. Those who have read Dickinson but happen not to have read this poem undoubtedly experienced a click upon reading the last version. To those who do not know Dickinson, the dashes are merely a curiosity.

We can illustrate the epiphany phenomenon one more time. If you know a song called "The Yellow Rose of Texas," you can reread the poem with its tune in mind and notice a comical effect. The words of this and many other Dickinson poems fit quite nicely into the setting of that song.

I have given you a series of keys -- perceptual tricks which help you to organize the information. You can learn the tricks of perception, and I have framed the presentation to present a hierarchy. You might have believed that the hierarchy represented some objective underlying truth about language had I not closed with a prank involving a comical analogy with the song. As it stands the progression illustrates my personality more clearly than it does "objective linguistic fact," whatever that may be. Some people when they read this poem will perceive the rhyme words immediately, others the philosophical observations. Others will recognize Emily Dickinson's poetry. Some will deal with the theology and psychology of the words. Perception is a function of information you bring to the object, and information is a function of perception, of personal history, or personality. I cam to the poem with a long history of loving music and a personality that loves jokes, so the hierarchy I created seems appropriate to me.

If you look back at the paragraph now, you'll probably have a sense of the poem emerging from the paragraph. Perhaps those of you who were familiar with the poem will have the opposite experience, of perceiving a paragraph where you saw only the lines of a poem before.

For me, doing grammar is a series of such experiences, observing figures and ground, and I sense that it is partly a matter of chance, which I happen to see first. If I have been focused tightly on something I may find a narrow focus. If I'm looking at the big picture I may take a broader focus.

When I look at the picture I usually see the old lady first. I also have habitual ways of seeing sentences. Usually when I look at a sentence I see phrases first. I can build words into phrases and link phrases to make clauses and clauses to make sentences or I can dissolve phrases into their component phrases and then into words. Take a clause like "The brain is wider than the sky" I see the brain as one unit, wider than the sky as another, and is as a third. I see them as if they were the quantities in an algebraic equation with is as the equal sign. There may not be anyone else who experiences the syntax of the poem this way. It's interesting to ask people how they perceive the units though. People's explanations usually turn out to have a circular quality about them.

49

The Anti-Whorfian Hypothesis

According to the Whorfian hypothesis, we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language. I'm arguing the reverse, that we dissect language along lines laid down by our perceptual apparatus. I have an inkling that if you were to accumulate enough people's explanations of the moment of getting an insight into syntactic structure, you'd develop a picture of some radically different language processing mechanisms on the part of different people, and I would speculate that if you followed the leads back to the source to try to determine where people's perceptions diverged, you'd continue till you got to a point where the term **ability** ceased to have meaning and the term **preference** took on more relevance. Then you would be left with the question of whether preference emerged from nurture or nature. Since I've been speculating already, I will continue to speculate.

I think the nature is the ground of our perception of language. I think nature forces us to make choices between the old lady and the young lady, between the poem and the paragraph. We can't perceive both in the same instant so we have to choose to perceive one first. The paragraph and the verse forms on the page are redundancies which underscore the perception or interferences which mask the perception, but they are not the perception.

I think further that nature makes us experience either pleasure or discomfort when we shift back and forth from one to the other. These preferences would seem to me to be likely to guide behavioral choices subtly so that over the period of a lifetime, we would either become good at grammar or not good at grammar. I like music and pranks, so over the years I have developed a facility with them.

What does it mean then to say you're good at grammar? As I think about my bimodal groups it seems logical to me to think of them as distinguished more by perceptual preferences than by ability. People who are good at grammar are people who do well on my tests, which measure what I'm interested in.

When Mr. Golden threw the diagrams onto the board, it was exactly as if "A magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen." I think I felt that I got it, experienced a moment of epiphany, because someone with nerves like mine, that is with a mind like mine, made the system. I'm pleased, speaking for myself, that my perceptual preferences are the sort that earn high scores on the tests, especially the ones my wife gives. But I don't flatter myself that everyone shares my wife's preferences.

The advantage I can give to a student or to a colleague with the perception I have shared is to gratify that curiosity I mentioned at the beginning of this essay -- to know what it feels like to be inside the skin of someone else who is perceiving language. Finally, each time I teach grammar I am hoping that someone will show me some new angle on language, and I am hoping that the new angle will give me information about how the mind works. Eventually, I would hope to see the historical and personal roots of language development. I would not be surprised to learn that the roots of language perception reach into the biology of the brain, but neither would I be very interested. I am most attentive when I can use language study as a heuristic system which enables me to change my perspective, to perceive from a different angle, to experience epiphany.

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Grammar and Usage in the Learning Center

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Sometimes lately I have felt a little like Chauncy Gardener in Being There, Peter Sellers' last movie, a tale about a childlike gardener who inadvertently achieves the admiration of the rich and powerful by simply being there and declaring that he likes to watch when asked his opinion on any subject. The tutors in the Center had often ignored my presence when I appeared as Director. A mere director has little to do with the day-to-day operations of a massive learning center that employs more than one hundred tutors. When, however, I told them that I wanted to watch what they were doing and had questions to ask them about their work, I suddenly became a popular member of the community. Liking to watch lent me credibility as a friend of the tutor in the trenches.

Ethnographical research usually involves becoming a participant observer in a particular environment (Spradley). In their book entitled Composition Research, Lauer and Asher say that "ethnographers observe many facets of writers in their writing environments over long periods of time in order to identify, operationally define, and interrelate variables of the writing act in its context" (39). Ethnographers hope both to identify and begin to answer questions about a given culture or subculture. Case studies, a similar method of qualitative research more familiar to writing specialists, endeavor to answer and ask questions through "close observation of natural conditions" in order to "identify new variables and questions for further research." Case studies can concern individuals, small groups, or whole environments (23). Particularly important to qualitative descriptive research is the basic approach to knowledge. In traditional positivistic research, the investigator posits an hypothesis, tests it, and either verifies or negates the theory. Ethnographers, on the other hand, record data without presupposing or presuming on the results. Their hypotheses develop from the observed data, through generation rather than testing of hypotheses. Validation of the hypotheses then comes through continued study of the data and further data collection.

In ethnographical research data collection requires that the researcher accumulate several sources of data, a process called triangulation. Lauer and Asher give examples of triangulated kinds of data: "using multiple observers, collecting writing samples, conducting interviews with students and instructors, and taking copious notes" (42). They also refer to a Sage study, Speaking of Ethnography (Agar 1985), which suggests that three kinds of notes be taken: "observational (a record of ongoing activities), methodological (a record of the means of triangulation), and theoretical (speculations about theory as it suggests itself to account for the behaviors under scrutiny)" (42).

This report uses ethnographic approaches for the most part, but at times the methodology may blend with case study approaches. The means of triangulation for this study

include interviews with tutors, notes on observations of tutors as they work with writing students, information from learning center reports and data banks, grammar hotline notes and data, and notes on personal tutoring experiences (the participant part of this participant observation). I set out to ask the question, "What do the tutors do about grammar and usage in our Center?" I knew, of course, what I had told them to do, but in twenty-five years of teaching literature and writing and of teaching teachers and tutors, I have seldom seen a correlation between what I suggest my students do and what they do do. Ethnographic research techniques have given me an opportunity to study that disparate phenomenon.

I found that grammar has much more and much less to do with the day-to-day functioning of the Center than I would have predicted. First, I had thought that we tutored far more in areas other than writing than we tutor in writing. In fact, we tutor writing nearly all the time in many contexts. Perhaps I was looking for what I found, but I observed that nearly every tutoring session, even those not specifically relating to writing, usually had some discussion of language at one level or another. On the other hand, I discovered that when tutors did discuss language and grammar, their discussions showed some rather startling differences from what I myself would have done in the circumstances.

We may all face our greatest test when we try to explain to someone else what we mean by grammar and usage. With language discussions as with discussions of religious preference, we can use the same words and mean something quite different. My neighbor over the back fence belongs to a Missouri Synod Lutheran church; I belong to an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation. We both might call ourselves Lutheran and feel quite chummy. We could not, however, talk about the military, movies, abortion, education, race, feminism, or even Sunday school without disagreeing. I fear that the same may be true when I talk about grammar to tutors.

Vande Kopple begins an article on clause parts in the July 1991 Written Communications by cautioning, "this body of research can be confusing and difficult to use, both for those who contribute to it and for those who do not. Many of those who contribute disagree about how to identify various parts of clauses, about what to call them, and about what roles they play" (311). No wonder we sometimes confuse our students and tutors. Tutors show by their definitions that they do not agree on a meaning for grammar. They show me regularly that they need training and guidance to see error patterns that I think embarrassingly obvious. We need to work to communicate what we mean by these expressions and not assume that a common correlate exists for our definitions. We need many specific examples of error patterns in sample papers before we begin to see what each of us means by grammar or usage error. I often find that teachers are talking at cross purposes themselves, so little wonder that tutors become confused.

Listen to what some of the tutors do and say. I asked first for a definition of grammar from six of our tutors who are also English majors. They offered these definitions: rules and structure, how words make sense, order, structure and rules, floor plans, blueprints, rules governing the language. They all seemed to have definitions that were at least something like my definition of grammar, but when we turned to examples illustrating what they meant by these definitions, usage and grammar, and meaning itself, blurred quickly. One tutor explained that she had been working with a Thai student who wanted idioms and common English usage. I found it interesting that this example was the first to come up in our discussion. Clearly, usage questions

relating to acquired knowledge perplex tutors and cause them confusion. In tutor training we spend both class meetings and staff meetings discussing the particular problems of language usage likely to occur when tutoring a foreign student. In this discussion I explained once again about the lack of tenses and the lack of gender in Oriental languages and that such characteristics of a language do not completely disappear after a few months, or even an few years, of speaking the second language.

One tutor had minored in Spanish, and all the tutors in our discussion had taken a foreign language at some point. We talked briefly about the abstracting qualities of having two systems to compare and the difference between learning a second language in school or in the foreign country. Everyone agreed that all their understanding of English grammar had come through their study of a second language and that they could not really talk about grammar with someone who had only one language. We all tried to remember what we understood about grammar before we had a foreign language, but it was like trying to remember pre-language experience. We could not sort out what we know now from what we knew then. The application of future knowledge to past experience made the question moot.

We then discussed the problems of tutoring students who have failed the University Writing Examination. This exam screens all graduating seniors at Illinois State. Between three and five percent of each class fails and must retake the exam. In order to help these students prepare for the retake, I analyze their papers and check off descriptors on a sheet showing areas needing improvement for each student who fails the examination. Tutors then use my guidelines in working with the students who have failed, most of whom have grammar and usage problems among other difficulties. The tutors' applications of my instructions clearly varied from my intentions. All the tutors agreed that reading through papers aloud is the best method for spotting the source of problems and having students recognize what is wrong with the language.

This solution seemed a bit vague to me, so I then asked what they did after the students spotted errors. The tutors said that then the students fixed the errors. Needless to say, I doubted that the tutors were reporting what they really do with such students. Had I thought that these writers could find their own mistakes, I probably would have overridden the readers of the exam and passed the students in the first place.

I pushed the tutors a bit to find out more about what they really do with students. They admitted that students always want rules that come out of a grammar book, that no student being tutored, especially on something so sensitive as a failure on a mandatory exam, will accept the tutor's word. The tutors thought about the issue a bit and agreed that students almost always wanted explanations from books, even though they often could not understand the explanations. This response fit with my observations as I had watched tutors work in the Center. Though they would go over papers, giving good advice, they always finally fell back to the handbooks or at least to the handbook explanations. The need for terminology and authority tended to dominate all tutoring sessions.

For example, I watched an experienced and expert tutor work with a student who had several problems with her paper. The tutor finally told her that she needed complete sentences and that she needed independent clauses. The discussion wended its way through nouns and verbs as I listened. The tutor talked and the student listened without responding with either questions or comments. The talk seemed magical to me. I could not see how the two were communicat-

ing over the paper. My impression sometimes is that tutors turn to grammatical language at points when communication has already broken down. The grammatical terminology becomes a way of avoiding communication, as it is for my Lutheran neighbor and me, rather than addressing the source of misunderstanding between student and tutor.

One of the tutors has written a paper on diagramming sentences for her grammar course this spring and allowed me to read it while preparing for this presentation. She ends the paper by saying, "Diagramming does not come easy to me, nor do I enjoy doing it. However, I feel that it is a necessary part to a well-rounded English education" (Sullivan 4). She has argued earlier in the paper that diagramming will lead to better writing, and that no person could be a great writer without being able to diagram. I was quite perplexed by her paper after her part in the interview in which everyone had agreed that it was better not to use terminology when explaining a problem in a paper. She, like the other tutors, clearly turns to terminology when explaining away a process she dislikes and would prefer to avoid.

I encountered a similar contradiction when putting together the survey research for my recent paper at CCCC in Boston. I asked secondary school teachers whom I had observed in their classes to answer a questionnaire about their teaching of grammar. Nearly all responded by saying that they know teaching grammar is ineffective and that they do as little as possible within the context of the writing classroom. The final question on the survey then asked whether they would teach grammar if their schools did not require it. All but eight of the responding teachers said that they would.

We have developed a double-think on the subject of grammar. Tutors and teachers use it but think they should not do so. They condemn grammar teaching at the same time that they say they must teach it. The pattern is fairly consistent and totally perplexing. Why this contradiction in so many responses? My participant observation may give some explanation. I do not tutor often, but when I do I am struck by the gulf between what I want to teach the writer with whom I am working and the means I possess to accomplish that aim. Maurice has already discussed the confusing issues surrounding students' understanding of grammar. Most students who come to our Center have no idea what they want or need. A few days ago a graduate student from sociology came to me asking for help with his writing. He offered for my inspection papers he had done for a masters level course. The grades on the papers were A's, the teacher someone whom I have known and respected for a long time. She had suggested to him that he come for help because his writing was not appropriate for graduate level work. He thought he had a grammar problem.

I read over his papers and found not grammar problems but rather usage problems of various kinds that could be summarized as exhibiting casual rather than academic register. He had been a college athlete who had made it through as an undergraduate with minimal work thanks to his keen intelligence. He wanted to work on grammar. I assured him that he would waste his time going through grammar workbooks and that he would fare better spending time with an English major who could show him how academic writing should "sound." He doubted my judgment but decided to try working with the tutor for one week. I have kept an eye and ear on the tutoring sessions and have noted that he now understands his problem and feels confident to address the register problems he before described as "grammar."

Often, this confusion among students who come to the Center persists even after tutoring has begun. My experiences confirm

again and again that the more trouble a student has with writing, the more likely that student will be to insist on grammar exercises, particularly if the student has attended a weak high school or has spent time in remedial classes. The particular drill and kill that deadens many a classroom appeals to the students who cannot profit from it, who will fall farther behind while forging through workbooks. In a learning center the tutors must persuade these students that drill and kill solutions will only waste everyone's time. Given the tutors' own tendencies to fall back on magical language rather than real understanding, helping them to help others demands that they learn to listen and communicate with those whom they tutor.

The obvious answer is error analysis, but this concept brings us back to square one of this discussion. I have often asked tutors to do what seems to me a simple error analysis of a student's paper. The patterns of errors that jump out at me elude most tutors, many graduate students, and most faculty who are not already committed to and fascinated with grammar. I'm fond of Muriel Harris, admire Glynda Hull, and have taught Shaughnessy cover to cover to graduate seminars for years, yet I find it challenging to teach a tutor to see the patterns of error that seem obvious to me. Tutors need careful guidance, using student papers and some clear definitions of grammar, usage, and error.

Back to my discussion with the English major tutors--most of them will be teaching their own English classes when the fall semester begins. I asked them how they felt about the prospect of teaching grammar. They all agreed that they are frightened, since they do not use book knowledge to speak and write themselves. They are typical first language learners whose grammar learning has nothing to do with their speaking or writing, yet they all know they will have to teach grammar in their schools. Most of them have had to answer the grammar hotline in the Center, by tutor report the most hated duty forced on otherwise willing workers.

Our grammar hotline received over fifteen hundred calls last year. Here are the statistics on the calls:

Usage: 624/1570 or 39%
Grammar: 698/1570 or 44%
Punctuation: 77/1570 or 4%
Diction: 12/1570 or 1%
Documentation: 81/1570 or 5%
Other 104/1570 or 7%

Calls came from thirty-three states and from Canada. These tutors had been dealing with grammar issues nearly every day of their assignments to the Center. Yet they were still afraid to face grammar teaching next month and they found error analysis largely mysterious. Someone had answered 1322 calls on grammar and usage, and yet these experienced tutors feared teaching what they had obviously helped to disseminate to over half the United States.

We still have work to do. We need to look closely at student papers and students writing papers to discover how error patterns evolve. We need to ask tutors to tell us how they know grammar. How do they tutor successfully? How do we measure that success? I've been watching and listening to them. I'm not sure that I'm much smarter than Chauncy Gardener, but I do know that grammar is a mystical, magical word that can strike fear in the heart of the strongest tutor. We all have some communicating to do.

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SAMPLE WRITING EXAM RESPONSES

Janice Neuleib

In response to a prompt which consisted of a reading passage on women's salary dlscrimination, a student wrote:

In my opinion, I think men should have a higher pay scale then women. Some of the reasons men should get 40% mora pay is because woman, most of the time, enjoy what they do at work, men usually have a family to take care of, and women, by tha meaning of strength, cannot do everything a man can do.

Women who make their careers as teachers, nurses store clerks, and bank tellers usually enjoy what they do. When they go to work women know that they can leave work early or make that job fun, because it is not a primary work place. Unlike the man when he goes to work he knows that is going to be his job until he retires or gets laid off. He cannot

just go in and shoot the bull with the boys and blow off work and still get paid at the end of tha week. A mans job is more serious and takes a little more non-enjoyable minutes, like a cop he protects the community and may get shot at once or twice, a construction work, he climbs a lot and could fall unlike a teacher or a bank clerk, and a service man who is in the military (air force pilot) which is over in Saudi-Arabia gettlng shot at. We traln women for this job, but cannot fly in combat so it is up to the male to take up her slack.

In response to a prompt consisting of an essay on the nature of art, a student wrote:

In this passage, the writter is asking weather or not the "happenings" could be considered art. I feel this is art and I will discusse several reasons why. I will also write about how you can not define art by its values, and how it looks. I will also write about how anything can be art, even a desk.

I feel the "happenings" were art pieces, because you can not lable art. There are a lot of artists out there in many different forms, for instants; photographers, panters, sculpures, found object artists, actor, carpenters, ect. the list goes on forever. I feel all these people are artist because they all hava their own style and understandings. A photographer showes his art by his pictures; a actor shows their's by performing for an audience. An actor can turn a dull piece into a very baautiful work of art. If the actor can at least get the audiences attention for awhile, the actor has done his job. Just like a photograper, if the viewer stops to look for a few seconds and finds it a little apeallng, the photographer has done his job. It is concid-erad art to the viewer and to the photographer.

Responses to Grammar Questionnaire

N=42 Janice Neuleib

How many years have you taught?

1-5 Years: 6 Teachers
6-10 Years: 10 Teachers
11-20 Years or more: 29 Teachers

1. In how many classes do you now teach grammar? What grade levels?

One class 5
Two classes 11
Three or more 21
None 1

7-8 Grades: 4 Teachers
9-10 Grades: 20 Teachers
11-12 Grades: 17 Teachers
College Freshman: 1 Teacher

2. What percentage of the school year is spent on grammar?

Less than 10%: 15 Teachers
11-20%: 9 Teachers
21%-30%: 7 Teachers
31% or more: 4 Teachers

3. Which book/books/handouts do you use?

Warriner's: 22 Teachers
The Prentice Hall Guide for College Writers: 2
Prentice Hall Grammar and Composition: 3
Houghton Mifflin Grammar and Composition
McDougall-Littell Comp and Grammar: 4
Heath Grammar and Composition: 2
English: Writing and Skills--Holt, Rinehart
Strong's Sentence Combining
The Art of Styling Sentences (honors English)
Laidlow

I create my own exercises and problems based on problems that occur in students' writing.

4. Would you teach grammar if it were not required by your school or district? If so, what changes would you make in the texts or methods?

Yes: 31 Teachers
No: 8 Teachers

The Effect That Separation of Content and Form Has on Grammar and Syntax Review in Business Writing Textbooks

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THE COMPOSITION MODEL

Observations made by some of the speakers at 1990 Syntax in the Schools Conference are representative of what some of us are doing at the University of Pittsburgh. I share the opinion that prescriptive teaching of grammar and syntax reaches a point of diminishing returns. I also share R.C. Hoover's belief that students should engage in metalinguistic operations. His quoting of Patrick Hartwell's view -- that writers need to develop skill in "manipulation of language with conscious attention to developing rhetorical competencies" -- reminds me of something I read some years ago by Thomas Johnson, a writing consultant, who differentiated between catalogical writing (in which ideas and facts are equated, as in a catalogue) and analytical writing (in which relative importance, cause and effect, and other relationships are shown through subordination, etc.) - an opposition I've often used in my writing courses. According to Johnson, analytical writing is easier to read, for much of the work of analyzing is done for the reader. I would add, after teaching composition courses for twelve years, that the shaping of sentences helps analyze the subject for the writer as well.

One of the goals, maybe the most basic one, to my mind, of higher education is helping students to learn to think for themselves. Coupling that with a statement by Roger Sale in his On Writing that 90 percent of intelligence, in his opinion, happens at the sentence level (I don't know the percent -- I believe a lot of it happens there, though), I see great value in attention to grammar and syntax as a way for students to gain more control over their subject matter, not because they have errors in their writing, but because they've catalogued everything -- trapped as they are in awkward sentence structures. My feeling is that they're not only writing in those structures but thinking in them, as well. When required to rework their language on the page, they're learning to think out more carefully -- to restructure and refine -- what it is they want to say or need to say. Example 1, for instance, shows alternative sentence structures that not only eliminate wordiness and repetition but also emphasize and subordinate various details.

I know, from my own writing experiences and those of my students, that understanding often "crystalizes" during writing and revising, especially if the subject is complex and lengthy. Hence, I've come to believe in Francis Bacon's comment that "writing maketh an exact man." I subscribe to the theory that writing is a medium of cognitive growth for the writer. And for me, grammar and syntax review feed into this pedagogical goal. I hope for my students to experience forgotten or never-understood sentence structures simultaneously with more control over subject matter and more careful articulation of

perspectives. Example 2 shows a student's coming to terms with his language -- seeing the problems and working toward more precision.

To me, a writing course is a language course, and a language course is a thinking course. Any course in writing should help students to develop their criticism skills and to improve thinking for themselves vis a vis audience and context. It should help them to be as intelligent as possible, and intelligence includes a growth component, a cognitive component, that is always present. Thus they learn to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps," so to speak. In order to do this, they must not only be able to write, but to critique their writing, to improve its quality with changes. They must develop some critical expertise and not just memorize rules. These are things we work toward in composition courses. And these are in keeping with the larger philosophy of the university.

THE BUSINESS WRITING MODEL

The business writing course, by its very nature, seems to work against that. By reputation, its ends are utilitarian and pragmatic. Already, time is seen as money, so everything must be presented as simply as possible. Students need to "fit in," and so exercises in developing perspective and innovativeness seem to be indulgent and off the track. So the myth goes.

One must ask: Am I teaching students to fill job slots or to think for themselves? The course seems dedicated to the former; the academician to the latter. This is perplexing to some, including me, who teach both composition and business writing, because in changing back and forth between the courses, it seems necessary to change, as well, the way we talk about language and writing.

While writing in composition courses is seen as at least quasi-constitutive of one's world and the writing process is seen as cognitive, in the business writing course, it is not. The language model commonly used in business writing analysis is based on a separation of content and form. Its justification comes from the idea that in the work world, we don't have control over content because we're being paid. It's sometimes called the "correspondence theory," wherein the quality of the language is judged by the degree to which it conforms to what it is describing. In business writing textbooks, the language model is described as "communication." Of the forty I've reviewed, thirty-seven equate business writing with communication (not composition). Communication can mean a variety of things, but here, it points to those theories that see written language as describing pre-existing things or ideas. It is "transparent" language -- good if it allows the reader to see the "message" in it. Thus we have statements like "language is a tool"; "every communication has two messages -- what you say and how you say it"; business writing "keeps information flowing"; in it we "exchange ideas, information, plans...." One text states, "All business letters in a sense are sales letters and PR letters. Information is a commodity; those who process it are valued...." In the business world, instead of being thinking writers, we become information processors.

Though metaphor is accorded a superfluous status (it can be added; it isn't essential) in business writing textbooks, much of the language describing business writing is metaphorical. Some is derived from information theory (messages, conveying, transmitting, noise, static); from computer technology (we process information); and even from carpentry (language is a tool, words are like bricks that we use to build a letter).

PROBLEMS WITH THIS LANGUAGE MODEL

One problem I have with this sort of language is that I don't see how it helps the students to become better writers and ultimately

better thinkers. What good does it do to think of business communication as a message sent by an encoder through environmental noise to a decoder? Yet this is an example of the direction that analysis of language, as communication, takes.

Another, and more important problem, is what I'd call the disappearance of the persona. Business writing textbooks are really addressing, implicitly or explicitly, "employees." A few use the word "employee." Others give themselves away with language like "boss" and "pay" and "moving up the ladder." Following this is an assumption that the writer upon becoming an employee relinquishes persona. (It's overshadowed by the company image.) When the persona disappears, it would seem irrelevant to consider the writing process as composing, as having cognitive growth potential for the writer as well as the reader. Without a persona, the writing one produces can't have constitutive potential, either, for how can a non-persona contribute to the creation, maintenance or change of a working reality?

The disappearance of persona ties in with another problem. Some textbooks create an opposition between composition and business writing (communication), or academic writing and writing in the "real world," that distorts the nature of composition. For instance, one text states: "We often forget the reader when we begin to write because when we first learned to write in school, we were told to write about ourselves and what we knew." (CTW-11-12) But the composition course is not concerned with writing about things like "What I Did Last Summer." It is not concerned with "writer-based" prose, as the excerpt suggests. The "patriotism" example illustrates, I hope, something more important. Here, the student is learning to choose words more precisely and to show more careful relationships. He is in the process of conceptualizing. If he hadn't written down his opinions, they would have stayed fuzzy and imprecise.

With the disappearance of the persona, the myth goes, students no longer have a need to understand the nature of business language, but only to process information. Thus, everything in the textbook itself becomes "information." Expediency (it appears) is achieved if business writing and communication are dealt with in short, handy definitions and if grammar and syntax are presented as a list of do's and don't's. In other words, we have the prescriptive approach.

This in turn creates other problems. Grammar and syntax rules are to be memorized. Expertise always remains with the texbook voice, therefore, and is never developed in the student. Students then don't learn from grammar and syntax review anything about manipulating language, about arriving at lucidity through writing. In addition, any tendency they have to be followers is cultivated. Grammar becomes one more way to be "ruled." This is contrary to what was happening for the student writing about patriotism. Those few lines could be changed to a consideration of "professionalism" in order to show how the same process might take place in industry. (See Example 3)

Other problems arise with separation of content and form. Grammar and syntax are reviewed for variety and effectiveness -- both seen as things that can be added to the message. Effectiveness in turn takes on a "salesmanship" flavor -- the writer wants the reader to react in a certain way, to "buy" his/her ideas. Another reason given for grammar and syntax review is to "impress." To impress the reader is to be effective, to be a good salesperson. To impress one's boss is to gain praise and promotion.

Thus, with rationales like "correctness," "variety," "effectiveness," and "making an impression," embedded as these are in a rhetoric based on separation of content and form, some of the least desirable qualities -- in academia or in the work world -- are cultivated: being a follower, being a salesperson, watching out for Number 1.

VOICES FROM THE "REAL WORLD"

That's not to say that being a salesperson is wrong, or that watching out for oneself is, either. However, interviews that I've conducted with employed professionals indicate that being a "follower" is not the way to promotion. They also show that skill with written language serves other important goals. It is: "working out my ideas on paper," "conceptualizing something before we build it," "arriving at mutually understood conditions in contracts."

A manager of 60 people told me that those who can think for themselves, not the "followers," are the ones who are promoted. An engineer stated, "If I couldn't think for myself, I wouldn't have gotten the job in the first place." Several others stated that they must be able to think and write well to perform their jobs. They're given task, budget and time frameworks, and how they accomplish their work within those frameworks is up to them. Those above them depend on them to suggest and recommend, to think and write creatively. Promotion is only a side-effect of that.

The interview data also indicates that professionals are not just describing but helping to constitute the reality in which they work. The "professionalism" excerpt is a short example of ideas moving upward in the company to change working conditions. Example 4, given to me by a woman in Boston, is a another. It's one of several drafts she and two others wrote while developing a new job description for submission to her boss and to Human Resources for approval. Several things should be noted about this example. (1) They conceptualized this job for someone above them to approve. (2) They adjusted their thinking as they revised -- thus the writing process was a cognitive one. (3) Human Resources controlled it in part by imposing some of their own language on it. (4) A negotiating process took place, manifested on the drafts, wherein agreement was finally reached. (5) A monetary value was attached to the Human Resources language. Certain words would require more salary, indicating that Human Resources was controlling money with language. (6) The language became the standard against which the job performance would be measured. This is opposite of the correspondence theory that the real world is the standard against which language is measured. (7) Finally, built into the job description itself is a thinking component for the new hire -- she would be required to make recommendations and participate in decision-making. This is constitutive thinking.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I don't think that prescriptive consideration of grammar and syntax promotes those qualities most needed for success in the business world -- the ability to work and think with others and yet independently, to create information and knowledge within contexts, to negotiate and recommend. The potential for grammar and syntax review to help writers articulate themselves well, to help them think out complicated subject matter and to help them create as well as describe their working reality is minimized when such review is surrounded by textbook rhetoric that separates content and form. A pre-occupation with unhelpful analysis (encoders, decoders, environmental noise, etc.) displaces more important considerations. The disappearance of persona results in inability to consider writing as composing, even though that is what professionals do. Those who write well in industry haven't learned it from the prescriptive approach to language usage. They've grown beyond it and learned that even though they're writing within a power structure, language itself has power. That a business writer could tell you that is evidence right there of

some metalanguage. Those who could be more aggressive and independent, and thus more valuable to their companies, don't have those qualities cultivated when taught prescriptively.

The business writing course, as a writing course and therefore a thinking course, should promote, through experiences in the course, the realization that language is power. The most significant distortion I see in the content/form dichotomy is that "clear" comes to mean transparent: How well can the reader see through the writing to the message? To the ideas and/or things behind it? "Clear" should mean not "transparent" but "lucid." I would like the student writer to understand that intelligence inheres in the prose, to be comfortable with a cognitive writing process when necessary, and to see the final product as sometimes creating the reality for the reader and writer. These are abilities that successful professionals possess. These are ends that grammar and syntax should serve.

The relationship of academic and business writing should be re-examined. It should be recognized that writing in industry is in some way composing. The audience, the purpose, and the power structure are different, but in some way it is still composing. "Persona" should be redefined to allow its existence in the business world. It can be seen as the thinking writer -- one who creates information and knowledge and doesn't just process, transmit or convey it. And grammar and syntax should have a different role in the business writing course. Instead of emphasizing correctness, which promotes obedience, or variety and effectiveness, which are superficial (or given superficial status in a content/form dichotomy) one should emphasize analytical skills and the inherent role of grammar and syntax in creative thinking in industry. In order for this to happen, the language model will have to change and content and form will have to be seen as inseparable.

(COMPOSITION) EXAMPLE 1

1. Wordiness and repetition are caused by the seesaw method of writing.
2. All details are given equal emphasis.

There are two possible routes that may be used in going from Pittsburgh to Titusville. The best route is to use Route 8 and Route 417. Route 8 goes from Barkeyville to Franklin. Route 417 goes from Franklin to a point seven miles south of Titusville. Route 8 is mostly four-lane highway. Route 417 is a two-lane country road. Route 8 is in good condition. Route 417 is in good condition, too.

(COMPOSITION) EXAMPLE 1 -- REVISING:

GROUP IDEAS TOGETHER

Route 8 is a four-lane highway. Route 8 is in good condition. Route 8 goes from Barkeyville to Franklin.

ELIMINATE REPETITION BY USING A PRONOUN

Route 8 is a four-lane highway. It is in good condition. It goes from Barkeyville to Franklin.

SENTENCE COMBINE

Route 8 is a four-lane highway, in good condition, and goes from Barkeyville to Franklin.

SUBORDINATE

Route 8, which is a four-lane highway in good condition, goes from Barkeyville to Franklin.

DELETE "WHICH" CLAUSE

Route 8, a four-lane highway in good condition, goes from Barkeyville to Franklin.

OR SUBORDINATE ANOTHER WAY

Route 8, which goes from Barkeyville to Franklin, is a four-lane highway in good condition.

DELETE "WHICH" CLAUSE

Route 8, going from Barkeyville to Franklin, is a four-lane highway in good condition.

(COMPOSITION) EXAMPLE 2

1. Redundancy is caused by the unnecessary prepositional phrase.
2. Personification is unnecessary and confusing.
3. "Considering" sets up a faulty relationship.
4. "So" sets up a faulty cause and effect.
5. Choice of material for main clause is not the best.

Patriotism of an even more dangerous degree is one that cannot accept criticism of national actions, even when proven wrong. No one is totally impervious to facts considering our modern day news services. So people that harbor this kind of acute patriotism have to be confronted with cold facts.

(COMPOSITION) EXAMPLE 2 -- REVISING

Patriotism of an even more dangerous degree is one that cannot accept criticism of national actions, even when proven wrong. No one is totally impervious to facts considering our modern day news services. So people that harbor this kind of acute patriotism have to be confronted with cold facts.

Patriotism of an even more dangerous degree is one that cannot accept criticism of national actions, even when proven wrong. No one is totally impervious to facts considering our modern day news services. So people that harbor this kind of acute patriotism have to be confronted with cold facts.

An even more dangerous patriotism is illustrated by one who cannot accept criticism of national actions, even when they are proven wrong. Unless one is totally impervious to facts, our modern day news services will confront such a person with cold facts.

(BUSINESS) EXAMPLE 3

An even better idea of professionalism is one that includes responsibility. In our particular case, that means taking care of customer needs promptly and also cooperating with each other here in the office. The current situation is that no one answers anyone else's phone. Customers call in and they are kept waiting when this happens. We feel a policy should be set that everyone answers each others' phones. Then customers won't be kept waiting.

An even better idea of professionalism is one that includes responsibility. In our particular case, that means taking care of customer needs promptly and also cooperating with each other here in the office. The current situation is that no one answers anyone else's phone. Customers call in and they are kept waiting when this happens. We feel a policy should be set that everyone answers each others' phones. Then customers won't be kept waiting.

An even better idea of professionalism includes responsibility. In our case, that means taking care of customer needs promptly. To do that, we must cooperate more with each other here in the office. Currently, no one will answer anyone else's phone, so customers calling in are kept waiting. We therefore feel a policy should be set that everyone answers each others' phones.

TEACHING GRAMMAR IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

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Introduction

Faculty members are well aware of the importance of good oral and written communication skills. Numerous studies conducted under the sponsorship of respected professional organizations have identified communications skills as a critical competency required of all employees in business, entry-level through executive management. Fundamental to the study of business communications is a good understanding of grammar. In recognition of this need, all College of Business students are required to complete a course in business communications during their senior year.

Background

The University of Houston Downtown is an undergraduate institution in the University of Houston system. This unit is an urban commuter school with approximately 8,500 students ranging in age from 18 to 60. These students are drawn from 50 states and 80 countries. This campus is the only unit in the system that has an open admissions policy. A significant number of students come from inner city schools and have no family history in higher education. Many of the International students are weak in their English skills. A large segment of the American-born and International student populations require academic nurturing. These groups both dream of joining the great American corporate structure when they graduate.

During the Fall 1990 two classes in Business Communications were given a pretest to determine the students' level of proficiency in English skills. Results showed that many students lacked a solid foundation in this area, and they demonstrated a strong distaste for review. To stimulate a desire in the students to improve their grammar skills, a research project was assigned. With their career goals as a base, class discussions centered around key requirements for success in business. Students developed a list of competencies they needed to be marketable. To the surprise of some, most of the competencies identified were communication skills. To reinforce their conclusions and to determine whether the content of the business communications course really had relevance to their needs, they designed a survey form. Student divided into teams; the teams selected companies to contact by referring to the Houston International Business Directory.

Findings

Managers in 54 firms in Houston were interviewed. During the interviews, students completed their survey forms and prepared written reports detailing their findings. Oral presentations were made by the teams in a

"staff meeting" setting to simulate a business environment. The presentations were video taped, and skills were critiqued by team members and the instructor. Students found that communication skills--oral and written--were critical to their success in getting and keeping a position in any type of business. After their discussions with managers in the business community, they understood the relationship betWeen good grammar skills and effective business communications.

Summary

Based on the results of the pretest and initial writing, the research project was assigned earlier in the semester to stimulate interest in acquiring skills necessary to prepare the written communications and oral presentations required in the course. The quality of the writing and speaking assignments was much higher after students completed their research than the pretest results and early writing indicated. Most students went to the English Lab voluntarily to complete additional work in grammar and punctuation. They spent time in the computer lab working with the review disk that accompanied their textbook. Classroom drills became exciting explorations instead of sheer drudgery. When the posttest was administered, several of the weakest students showed significant improvement in their scores.

Among the desired outcomes, students left Business Communications feeling they were better writers and better prepared to undertake careers in business.

65

A Systemically Based Approach to Teaching the College Grammar Course

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ABSTRACT

Grammatical analysis which uses the conceptual framework of British Systemic Linguistics and, as far as possible, traditional labels for formal categories and functional positions has made it possible for me to cover many more facts of English grammar (than when I used a transformational approach) and to involve my students more actively in the course. After a brief overview of systemic grammar, the following items are presented and described with a view to eliciting comments and suggestions: (1) samples of sentence analyses using my analytical notation and format, (2) the partial grammar which my students learn to apply to sentence analysis, and (3) some analytical aids I have developed to help them apply the generalizations in the grammar to the analysis of specific sentences.

For more than twenty years, I have regularly taught an upper division undergraduate course in English linguistics which fulfills teacher certification requirements. It has had different titles at different universities, but the title of a book I produced for the course in 1975, and whose basic approach I followed well into the 1980s, was Modern English Linguistics: A Structural and Transformational Grammar (Thomas Y. Crowell). During the middle 1980s, I became increasingly dissatisfied with the amount of time and effort it took to teach students the conceptual apparatus of transformational grammar -- so much in fact that I felt my students were barely touching the surface of the rich factual content of English grammar.

A research interest in discourse structure had put me in close contact with British Systemic Linguistics, and I gradually came to feel that it would provide not only the same empirically rooted objectivity as transformational grammar but also a means of probing more deeply the details of English grammar even in the relatively short time span of a college semester.

I would like to try to do three things in my remarks today:

(1) give you a quick feel for systemic linguistics,

(2) show you the actual mini-grammar that I currently build my course around, and

(3) show you some of the practical pedagogical aids I have developed to help my students understand the grammar and apply it to the analysis of sentences.

I am so delighted to have discovered that this organization exists and that there are so many educators out there like yourselves who share my passion for teaching grammar, that I will probably try to touch on more than my alloted time allows. But don't worry; I not

only hope to finish in the half hour assigned to me, but even to leave some minutes for discussion during that half hour. Nevertheless, my real puprpose is to elicit more extensive comments and suggestions from you individually, both in the halls at the conference and by mail afterwards.

(The following brief overview of Systemic Linguistics is an updated version of a portion of Broderick, 1988.) Systemic Linguistics was developed primarily in England during the last thirty years or so, mainly by Michael Halliday, who based his ideas on earlier work by J.R. Firth. (See, for example, Firth, 1957; Halliday, 1961; Muir, 1972; and Kress, 1976. See also Hudson, 1976, for an explanation of systemic linguistics in the terminology of Chomskyan linguistics, and especially Butler, 1985, for a thorough and comprehensive treatment of every aspect of the development, content, and relevance of Systemic Linguistics.) Systemic grammar is a particularly British version of a broadly European functionalist - structuralist tradition of linguistic analysis. (See, for example, Hjelmslev, 1961 and Martinet, 1962). Implicit in all work in this European tradition and especially explicit in systemic theory is the careful and consistent distinction between the so called "axis of chain" and "axis of choice" in language analysis. Along the axis of chain, elements of structure have syntagmatic (syntactic) relations to other elements; along the axis of choice, linguistic classes have paradigmatic (categorial) relations to other classes. Linguistic functions are described along the axis of chain; linguistic forms are defined along the axis of choice.

Consider the sentence, Students study poetry. When we say that students is the subject, study the predicate, and poetry the direct object, we are describing functions, i.e., their left-to-right relationships to one another along the chain of elements that make the three-word sequence an English sentence. But when we call students and poetry nouns and study a verb, we are in each case relating these words to other words that do not appear but which are in a sense lined up behind the words that do appear along the perpendicular axis of choice. Thus we could choose other members of the category noun to replace poetry and produce sentences like

Students study books,
Students study life, or
Students study French.

But we cannot substitute, say, a word like depart for poetry: *Students study depart would not be a sentence because depart, being a verb, does not have the same categorial relationship to students that nouns like books, life, and French have.

An expanded version of the sentence just discussed is analyzed in somewhat more detail in in Display 1 (D1), the page immediately after the References at the end of this paper: College students should study some poetry. In that display, above the list of abbreviations, is a tree diagram containing labels of both the formal (paradigmatic) categories in the sentence and their functional (syntagmatic) relationships. Formal category labels for phrase and clause types are printed with an arrow head beside them, e.g., NP>, and formal category labels for parts of speech are printed with three ellipsis dots beside them, e.g., N...; functional relationship labels are printed with a colon beside them, e.g., DO:. Beside the four major formal category labels in the diagram are four boxes containing horizontally printed formulas. These boxes are not part of the diagram. (They are, in fact, part of) Above the sentence diagram itself are several other boxes in which networks of terms are printed vertically. These are not part of the diagram either. (They, too, are part of) Nor are the dashed lines connecting these vertical boxes to certain functional abbreviations in the diagram part of the diagram.

What does the diagram itself say about the sentence? First, it labels each part of speech. College is a noun, N...; students, a noun, N...; should, a modal auxiliary, MAux...; study, a verb, V...; some, an indefinite article, IArt...; and poetry, a noun, N.... Next, the diagram indicates the function of each of these words in the phrase it belongs to: College functions as modifier, M:, and students functions as head, H:, in the noun phrase, college students; should functions as first helping predicater, HP1:, and study as main predicater, MP:, in the verb phrase, should study; some functions as determiner, D:, and poetry, as head, H:, in the noun phrase, some poetry. The diagram then labels the form and function of each phrase in the clause: College students is a noun phrase, NP>, functioning as subject, S: ; should study is a verb phrase, VP>, functioning as predicate, P: , and some poetry is a noun phrase, NP>, functioning as direct object, DO: . Notice that formal labels like NP> and VP> are defined by looking downward to the internal structure of a sequence of words so labeled: the label NP> is assigned to college students because it has a noun in it ; however, functional labels like S:, P:, and DO: are defined by looking upward to the position in the category higher up and noting the relationship of that position to other functional elements in the chain: For example, the label, subject, S: , is assigned to college students because it precedes the predicate, P: . The entire sequence is labeled formally a declarative clause, DeclCl>, and functionally an independent sentence element, ISE:. However, a precise functional label on the highest level would be determined by the context in which the declarative clause actually appeared.

A descriptive grammar of English should be able to show why the particular set of formal and functional labels given in the diagram is associated with this sentence. More importantly, a descriptive grammar of English must be able to specify a similar network of formal and functional labels for any sequence of English words that would qualify as an English sentence. The matter in the boxes on the display we are examining is intended to exemplify how a systemically based functional grammar goes about that task. In the boxes next to the formal labels in the tree diagram -- the ones with the horizontally printed formulas -- some general statements appear which specify functional (syntagmatic) patterns in the declarative clause. The box beside DeclCl> makes the general claim that every declarative clause contains a subject, S:, followed by a predicate, P: -- neither of these labels is in parentheses. The formula then asserts that an indirect object, (IO:), and/or a direct object, (DO:), may follow the predicate -- these labels are in parentheses. The ellipsis dots indicate that there are additional possibilities (the given formula is meant only to be illustrative). The arrow head in the formula following the abbreviation, DeclCl>, specifies that the declarative clause may have any one of the following functional patterns within it.

Please note that boldface type highlights just those functional elements in each functional pattern that explain the actual pattern occurring in the sample sentence: Subject, predicate, and direct object do appear, and so are in boldface, but indirect object does not. The example formulas in the other three horizontal boxes illustrate how the internal structures of the two noun phrases and the verb phrase are similarly explained as particular functional patterns selected from among a range of possibilities in generalized functional formulas. Notice, for instance, that the formula is the same for the two noun phrases, but that different options are chosen in the case of the subject noun phrase and the direct object noun phrase: The former is composed of a modifier and a head, and the latter is composed of a determiner and a head. Simi-

larly, in the verb phrase, whereas the formula allows for more than one helping predicater to precede the main predicater, only the first helping predicater appears in the sample sentence.

And now, viewing the display sideways, we can discuss the remaining boxes. These illustrate how formal categories in a sentence are chosen (or, to put it another way, how formal labels are inserted into the proper places in tree diagrams). Just as there are explicit patterns specifying possible sequences of elements of structure along the axis of chain, so too are there definable systems of subclassification that select categories along the axis of choice to play a given functional role in a phrase or clause. A descriptive grammar of English must state explicitly, for example, just what categories of words may play the role of modifier in a noun phrase. The box at the top (with the display turned sideways) begins to specify the possible choices in the system of categories operating at the functional position, modifier, in noun phrase structure. Note that the dashed line connects the modifier system to the colon after the abbreviation, M:, in the subject noun phrase. Just as the arrow specifies functional patterns, so too does the colon define the organized array of categories that can fill a certain functional position.

Within the modifier system in the first box, the following choices are available: an adjective, e.g., young; a noun, e.g., college; a present participle, e.g., growing; or a past participle, e.g., chosen. In the sample sentence, the noun option was selected. (The term, noun, is printed in boldface type to indicate this; similarly, in every example system in the display, the option selected in the sample sentence is printed in boldface type.) The ellipsis dots indicate that the modifier system probably has additional subclassifications and perhaps subclassifications of those subcategories. This point is better illustrated by referring to the next box, which describes the system operating at head in the noun phrase.

A noun was of course selected from this system to be head of the subject noun phrase in the sample sentence. But a pronoun could, in principle, also be selected. The system subclassifies pronouns into three types, and the ellipsis dots indicate that further subclassifications are possible. These additional subclassifications would include terms like singular and plural; first person, second person, and third person; and nominative and accusative. Notice that the further we proceed into the network of subclassifications, the more we approach specifying a particular lexical item. For example, if we chose pronoun, personal, plural, first person, accusative, we would specify the word us. Strictly speaking, the terms in a system go well beyond a detailed list of part-of-speech labels, as my simplified examples seem to indicate. The further we move into the network of systemic subclassifications, the more explicitly do we make choices that specify meanings and, ultimately, the selection of particular words.

As I have just noted, it is an oversimplification of systemic theory to imply that terms in a system are part-of-speech labels -- in fact, they are semantic terms (or features, if you will), which specify the content of categories as well as the patterns that compose them. I have oversimplified the model in yet another way -- also for the sake of clarity: Some of the choices which I indicate as operating at head, are more properly assigned to the next level up. This is because the choice of a pronoun as head of a noun phrase precludes the possibility of even having a modifier, much less choosing terms in the modifier system network; i.e., English does not allow modifiers of pronouns (*happy she, *good it).

Notice that the next system in the display we are examining is a clause-level system. The choice of the term declarative clause makes the functional formula printed on the

upper left of the sentence diagram operational. If, instead, the term imperative clause had been chosen, then a different formula for functional patterns would be operative, one that would not include subject in the pattern (imperative sentences like Open the door do not have subjects). If the yes/no interrogative option were selected, then the formula for its functional patterns would specify that a helping predicater would precede the subject (as happens in the sentence Should college students study some poetry?). This is another important aspect of systemic theory that is true of all systems but easier to illustrate with clause-level systems: i.e., that choices of terms in a (paradigmatic) system network typically determine operative functional formulas which then specify the order of elements along the (syntagmatic) chain.

Notice that two additional "system boxes" appear behind the Independent - sentence - element box. These represent other networks of choices that can affect the order of elements in the clause. The system on top is called the mood system, where the choice of declarative clause determines, among other things, the presence of a subject and its position relative to the predicate. One of the hidden systems is the theme system, which determines a variety of word order options such as the placement of adverb phrases functioning as clause complements: i.e., any clause element may be placed in initial position and made the "theme" of the clause. Another of the hidden systems is the transitivity system, which determines yet other word order options such as active versus passive. Thus, a choice in the mood system will mark a given element as "subject," a choice in the theme system will mark a given element as "theme," and a choice in the transitivity system will mark an element as "actor." In the sentence The duke gave my aunt this teapot, the duke is simultaneously subject (element with which the predicate agrees), theme (first element), and actor (logical "doer of the action"). But consider the sentence This teapot my aunt was given by the duke. Whereas the duke remains the actor, this teapot is now the theme, and my aunt is the subject (See Halliday, 1985: pp. 34-35). The mood system is said to be part of the "interpersonal" component of clause grammar. The theme system is said to be part of the "textual" component, and the transitivity system is said to be part of the "experiential" component, and the order of elements in the clause is determined by independent and simultaneous choices in the three clause-level systems.

The other system networks in the display describe choices that are available at the functions Main Predicater, Determiner, and Direct Object, respectively.

Please note that in my adaptation of systemic grammar I have in many cases substituted terminology from the American grammatical tradition for terms widely accepted and used within the British Systemic Tradition. Whenever possible, I have tried to use follow the terminology of Quirk et al., 1985, A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language, and its recently published student version, Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990. Both of these books, the most comprehensive and authoritative contemporary grammar reference works are primarily rooted in systemic linguistics, take careful account of the insights of the transformational tradition, and seem to try to do it all using reasonably familiar traditional grammatical terminology.

My course begins with a substantive look at English morphology, defining, exemplifying, and analyzing free and bound roots and sub-types of prefixes and derivational suffixes, and working especially carefully with all the English inflectional suffixes. Then we spend a few weeks looking closely at about 18 English parts of speech, learning to define and identify examples in terms of their forms,

functions, and meanings. With those objectives accomplished, we then spend the remaining eight or nine weeks working with the materials contained on the displays numbered D2 through D13 at the end of this paper. The students read selections from the grammatical chapters of my two books, Broderick 1975 and 1982, some of which have been significantly reworked in in the name of terminological consistency. All of these materials are now contained in a but I hope soon to develop them into the first draft of a new book, which I have tentatively titled English Grammar: Patterns and Choices.

The displays numbered D2 through D13 are photo-reduced and presented in pairs to show you how my students experience them on facing pages in the course pak. The five odd-numbered displays, D5 through D11, constitute the around which this portion of the course is built. On the even numbered pages facing these pages are a variety of handouts that help students understand the information in the grammar (usually with special relevance to the facing page) and apply it to the analysis of sentences. The last two displays numbered D12 and D13 contain a list of sentences that are used both for teaching and for practice.

Let helping auxiliarys like taking me home with them and having me guide their hands as they diagram verb phrases.

The (one) pattern and the choices in the prepositional phrase are listed at the bottom of D5, and the patterns and choices in the adjective and adverb phrases are listed at the bottom of D9. Thus, all the functional positions of prepositional phrases have been introduced by the end of D9. The handout in D8 presents an algorithm which helps students decide which of four possible functions of a prepositional phrase a given prepositional phrase represents. Here again, I think that you can figure it out without my taking you through it line by line. I do want to emphasize however, that a great amount of teaching, explaining, board work, and even individually monitored quiet classroom work (not to mention tutorial sessions in my office) is needed to help students relate the analytical skills they learn by using such handouts to just those lines in the accompanying grammar that each handout is helping them to apply. I think it is extremely important for them to see a self-contained grammar such as the one on the odd numbered pages, with a beginning, middle and end, and to learn that it defines (or if you like that term) uncountable numbers of separate sentence structures, and to learn that such a grammar is but a very rudimentary model of knowledge that anyone who speaks and understands English must have. And most important of all, I constantly point out to them that learning English grammar is not just learning to use this limited grammar to analyze the relatively simple sentences I give them to analyze. Rather, it is learning how to look at the more complicated sentences that they encounter in newspapers, in literature, in television talk shows, and in conversations, and then learning how to expand the array of formal and functional terms contained in the partial grammar we focus on in the course.

To help them do this, I have purposely made the grammar less and less complete toward the end. The patterns and choices in the various non-finite clauses described in D11 are far from complete (even though the analytical handout on the facing D10 is still reasonably concrete and explicit). And the patterns and choices in that clauses, relative clauses, and adverb clauses are not specified at all. In fact, the final two weeks of the course are spent working with the sentences in D13 with the specific aim of discovering the patterns and choices in interrogative clauses as well as in these various types of dependent clauses.

Allow me one more comment on the

displays. The sentences in D12 are grouped as follows: 1 through 6 are used to teach the noun phrase; 7 through 14, the verb phrase; 15 through 19, the adjective phrase; and 20 through 23 the adverb phrase. Sentences 24 through 28 mix all of the above; 29 through 30 introduce the various kinds of non-finite clauses: gerund clauses, present participle clauses, past participle clauses, and infinitive clauses.

And so here I must end my formal remarks. I am interested in any and all types of comments and reactions, ranging through evaluations of the whole systemic functional orientation, the course organization, the effectiveness and accuracy of the analytical tools, and the specific choices of terminology. Thank you.

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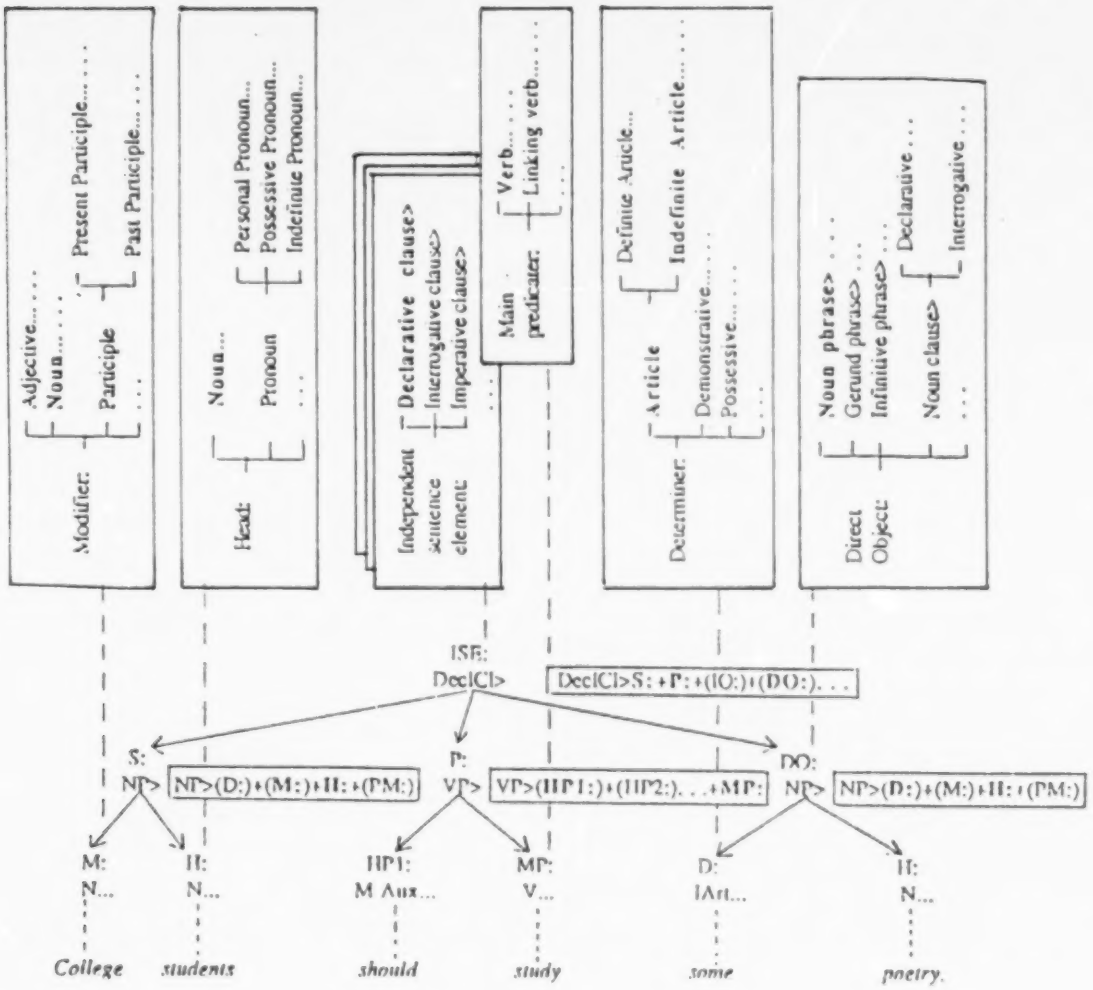
Note: The following pages include supplemental information for this presentation.

72

A TREE-DIAGRAM ANALYSIS OF FORM AND FUNCTION IN A DECLARATIVE CLAUSE
WITH THE APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF A FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR REPRESENTED IN BOXES
(HORIZONTAL BOXES CONTAINING FUNCTIONAL PATTERNS AND
VERTICAL BOXES CONTAINING SYSTEMS OF FORMAL CHOICES)


Modifier: Adjective... Noun... Participle ... Present Participle... Past Participle...
Head: Noun... Pronoun ... Personal Pronoun... Possessive Pronoun... Indefinite Pronoun...
Independent sentence element: Declarative clause> Interrogative clause> Imperative clause> ...
Main predicater: Verb... Linking verb... ...
Determiner: Article Definite Article... Indefinite Article... Demonstrative... Possessive... ...
Direct Object: Noun phrase> ... Gerund phrase> ... Infinitive phrase> ... Noun clause> Declarative... Interrogative ...
ISE: DeclCl>
DeclCl>S:+P:+(IO:)+(DO:)...
S: NP> NP>(D:)+(M:)+H:+(PM:)
P: VP> VP>(HP1:)+(HP2:)...+MP:
DO: NP> NP>(D:)+(M:)+H:+(PM:)
M: N...
H: N...
HP1: M Aux...
MP: V...
D: IArt...
H: N...
College
students
should
study
some
poetry.

Key to abbreviations:

Adj... = Adjective
DeclCl> = Declarative clause
D: = Determiner
DO: = Direct Object
H: = Head
HP1: = First helping predicater
HP2: = Second helping predicater
IArt... = Indefinite Article
IO: = Indirect object
N... = Noun
ISE: = Independent sentence element
M: = Modifier
MAux... = Modal auxiliary
MP: = Main predicater
NP> = Noun phrase
P: = Predicate
PM: = Postmodifier
S: = Subject
VP> = Verb phrase
V... = Verb

73

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SOME NOTES ON FUNCTIONS IN THE DECLARATIVE CLAUSE

PREDICATE (P): ***(Functional definition:) Must occur; virtually always immediately follows the subject. [Typically, VPs and LVPs fill this function.]*** (Notional definition:) Ordinarily describes actions or states of being. *(Examples:) The ambassador departed* (action). *Books are tools* (state of being). *Truth can appear fuzzy* (state of being).

SUBJECT (S): ***Must occur; virtually always immediately precedes the predicate; 3rd singular "s" allomorph of -prs always agrees with it. [Typically, NPs fill this function.]*** Ordinarily names persons, things, or ideas that perform the action or exist in the state described in the predicate: *The ambassador departed* (person). *Books are tools* (thing). *Truth can appear fuzzy* (idea).

DIRECT OBJECT (DO): ***Typically immediately follows the predicate; follows an indirect object if one appears; never follows a predicate with a linking verb phrase. [Typically, NPs fill this function.]*** Ordinarily names persons, things, or ideas that are directly affected by the action described in the predicate: *The losers congratulated the winners. Union members build better homes. Many philosphers have described love.*

INDIRECT OBJECT (IO): ***The first of two NP's immediately after a VP when the second is a DO and this NP can be paraphrased with a to or for PP (placed after the DO). [Typically, NPs fill this function.]*** Ordinarily names persons, things, or ideas indirectly affected by the action described in the predicate (they are typically goals, destinations, or beneficiaries): *You should send the bank an explanation. The judge granted Elizabeth a divorce. The negotiators gave the peace treaty priority. Mary has built her family a sailboat.*

OBJECT COMPLEMENT (OC): ***The second of two NP's immediately after a VP when the first is a DO and this NP is a restatement of the DO. [Typically, NPs fill this function.]*** Names persons, things, or ideas that are related to the DO by an implied linking verb: *The voters elected him president* (he is president). *The preacher called money an evil thing* (money is an evil thing). *Some doctors make health care a luxury* (health care is a luxury).

SUBJECT COMPLEMENT (SC): ***Immediately follows a predicate that has a linking verb phrase. [Typically, NPs and AdjPs fill this function.]*** Names persons, things, or ideas (if it is a NP); or specifies qualities or characteristics (if it is an AdjP) that are closely linked to the subject by means of the linking verb phrase that functions as predicate: *Electric cars may be a solution. Little leaguers become solid citizens. Some college professors are lazy. Those children seem quite happy.*

PREDICATE COMPLEMENT (PC): ***Typically follows the predicate directly or follows the direct object. (Doesn't follow a predicate with a linking verb phrase.) [Only PPs fill this function.]*** Relates persons, things, or ideas closely to the predicate; the verb in the verb phrase seems to "expect" the preposition that introduces the predicate complement PP: *The judge granted a divorce to Elizabeth. The guests were looking at the exhibit. The solution depends on you. I was hoping for a bigger raise.*

CLAUSE COMPLEMENT (CC): ***Typically appears at either the beginning or end of any declarative clause pattern. Typically answer questions using words like how? where? when? or why? [Typically, PPs and AdvPs fill this function.]*** Gives information about the manner (how), place (where), time (when), reason (why), frequency (how often), etc. of whatever is going on in the declarative clause: *The thieves removed the window very carefully / with care* (how). *In Canada / There the supply of clean water is very plentiful* (where). *I didn't understand calculus during those years / then* (when). *For some reason, I have trouble with foreign languages* (why).

A PARTIAL GRAMMAR OF THE ENGLISH DECLARATIVE CLAUSE

Patterns in the Declarative Clause:

1	DeclCl>	S: + P:						
2	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:						
3	DeclCl>	S: + P:						+ CC:
4	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:						+ CC:
5	DeclCl>	S: + P:		+ DO:				
6	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:		+ DO:				
7	DeclCl>	S: + P:		+ DO:				+ CC:
8	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:		+ DO:				+ CC:
9	DeclCl>	S: + P:				+ PC:		
10	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:				+ PC:		
11	DeclCl>	S: + P:				+ PC:		+ CC:
12	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:				+ PC:		+ CC:
13	DeclCl>	S: + P:		+ DO:		+ PC:		
14	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:		+ DO:		+ PC:		
15	DeclCl>	S: + P:		+ DO:		+ PC:		+ CC:
16	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:		+ DO:		+ PC:		+ CC:
17	DeclCl>	S: + P:	+ IO:	+ DO:				
18	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:	+ IO:	+ DO:				
19	DeclCl>	S: + P:	+ IO:	+ DO:				+ CC:
20	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:	+ IO:	+ DO:				+ CC:
21	DeclCl>	S: + P:		+ DO:	+ OC:			
22	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:		+ DO:	+ OC:			
23	DeclCl>	S: + P:		+ DO:	+ OC:			+ CC:
24	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:		+ DO:	+ OC:			+ CC:
25	DeclCl>	S: + P:		+ SC:				
26	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:		+ SC:				
27	DeclCl>	S: + P:		+ SC:				+ CC:
28	DeclCl> CC: +	S: + P:		+ OC:				+ CC:

Choices in the Declarative Clause:

29	S: NP>
30	S: GerCl>
31	S: InfCl>
32	S: thatCl>
33	P: VP>
34	P: LVP>
35	DO: NP>
36	DO: GerCl>
37	DO: InfCl>
38	DO: thatCl>
39	PC: PP>
40	IO: NP>
41	OC: NP>

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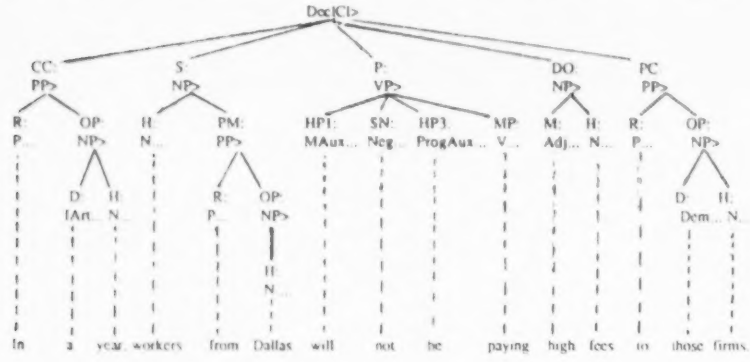
In a year, workers from Dallas will not be paying high fees to those firms.

```
DeclCl>   CC: PP>     R: P...                          In
                      OP: NP>     D: IArt...           a
                                  H: N...              year
          S: NP>      H: N...                          workers
                      PM: PP>     R: P...              from
                                  OP: NP>   H: N...    Dallas
          P: VP>      HP1: MAux...                     will
                      SN: Neg...                       not
                      HP3: ProgAux...                  be
                      MP: V...                         paying
          DO: NP>     M: Adj...                        high
                      H: N...                          fees
          PC: PP>     R: P...                          to
                      OP: NP>     D: Dem...            those
                                  H: N...              firms
```

```
DeclCl>
CC:          S:           P:                          DO:      PC:
PP>          NP>          VP>                         NP>      PP>
R:  OP:      H:  PM:      HP1:  SN:  HP3:  MP:        M:  H:   R:  OP:
P.. NP>      N.. PP>      MAux... Neg... ProgAux... V.. Adj... N... P... NP>
    D:  H:       R:  OP:                                          D:  H:
    IArt... N...     P... NP>                                     Dem... N...
                         H:
                         N...
In  a  year,  workers  from  Dallas  will  not  be  paying  high  fees  to  those  firms.
```




```
42                                    SC: NP>
43                                    SC: AdjP>
44                                    SC: InfCl>
45                                    SC: thatCl>

46                                    CC: PP>
47                                    CC: AdvP>
48                                    CC: AdvCl>
```

Patterns in the Noun Phrase:

```
49  NP>                    H:
50  NP>          M:      + H:
51  NP>          M: + M: + H:
52  NP> D:               + H:
53  NP> D: + M:          + H:
54  NP> D: + M: + M:     + H:
55  NP>                  H: + PM:
56  NP>          M:      + H: + PM:
58  NP> D:               + H: + PM:
59  NP> D: + M:          + H: + PM:
60  NP> D: + M: + M:     + H: + PM:
```

Choices in the Noun Phrase:

```
61                                    H: N...
62                                    H: PersPro...
63                                    H: DemPro...
64                                    H: IndPro...
65                                    H: RelPro...

66                                    M: Adj...
67                                    M: N...

68                                    D: DArt...
69                                    D: IArt...
70                                    D: Dem...
71                                    D: Poss...
72                                    D: PossNP>
```

(Patterns and choices in the PossNP> are similar to the NP>.)

```
73                                    PM: PP>
74                                    PM: PrsParP>
75                                    PM: PstParP
76                                    PM: InfCl>
77                                    PM: RelCl>
```

The Pattern in the Preposition Phrase:

```
78  PP> R: + OP:
```

Choices in the Preposition Phrase:

```
79                                    R: P...

80                                    OP: NP>
81                                    OP: GerCl>
```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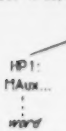
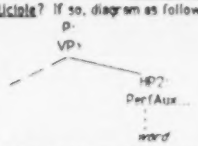
ANALYZING FORM AND FUNCTION IN THE ENGLISH (DECLARATIVE) VERB PHRASE

Categories of the English VP› (Tense, *-ing* or *-ed*, occurs in the first item in the VP›):	HP1: MAux...	+ HP2: PerfAux...	+ HP3: ProgAux...	+ HP4: PassAux...	+ MP: V...	~ MP: LV...
Morphemes that signal the presence of the categories:	*can (could) may (might) will (would) shall (should) must ...*	*have* followed by a Pas Par ... *(has) (had)*	*be* followed by a Prs Par ... *(am, is, are) (was, were) (been)*	*be* followed by a Pas Par... *(am, is, are) (was, were) (been, being)*	*(breat)* *(breats)* *(broke)* *(broken)* *(breaking)*	*be* *(am, is, are)* *(was, were)* *(been, being)* become ...

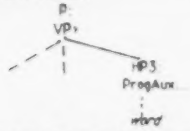
1. Identify the Predicate: VerbPhrase› and bracket it for analysis.
2. Moving from left to right within the VP›, ask the following questions and diagram as directed.
   a. Is the first word a modal auxiliary (MAux... *can, may, will, shall, could, might, would, should*)? If so, diagram as follows:



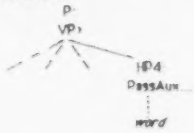
   b. Do *have, has,* or *had* appear followed by a past participle? If so, diagram as follows:



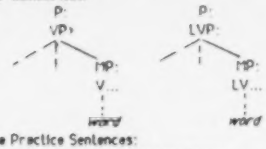
   c. Do *am, is, are, was, were, be,* or *been* appear followed by a present participle? If so, diagram as follows:



   d. Do *am, is, are, was, were, be, being* or *been* appear followed by a past participle? If so, diagram as follows:

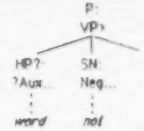


3. Any and all auxiliaries in the declarative clause have now been diagrammed; the last word is not yet diagrammed. It is either a V or an LV. Decide which, and diagram as appropriate in one of the following ways (there may or may not be one or more auxiliaries):

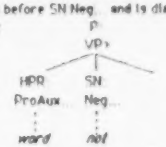


4. Some Practice Sentences:
   a. Edgar may have solved the problem.
   b. John may be the best teacher.
   c. Someone stole a book from that woman.
   d. Mary has been reciting poetry.
   e. I have been having headaches.
   f. The message was decoded.
   g. The witness was being stubborn.
   h. Canada will be negotiating with France.
   i. The cake should have been eaten.
   j. The dean had been an anthropologist.

5. In negative declarative clauses, *not* may be inserted after the first auxiliary:



6. If there is no auxiliary, then *do, does,* or *did* appears before SN Neg... and is diagrammed as follows:



Patterns in the Verb Phrase (and Linking Verb Phrase):

| | | |

SOME PROCEDURES TO HELP IDENTIFY THE FUNCTIONS OF PPs

I. If the **PP** immediately follows a noun **and** answers questions like, *Which [noun]?* or *What kind of a [noun]?* then it is a ***Post Modifier (PM)*** **in** a **Noun Phrase (NP).**
The author from France wrote a book of poetry.

II. If the PP immediately follows an adjective **and** seems to fulfill an "expectation" of the adjective, it is an ***Adjective Phrase Complement (AdjPC)*** **in** an **adjective Phrase (AdjP).**
Mary was happy about the news.
John is very fond of sweets.

III. Otherwise, the PP is either a ***Clause Complement (CC)*** or a ***Predicate Complement (PC):***

A. It is a ***Clause Complement (CC)*** if:

1. It is just as likely to appear at the **beginning** as at the **end** of a clause:
With care, the thieves removed the window. / The thieves removed the window with care.
In Canada, the supply of clean water is very plentiful. / The supply of clean water is very plentiful in Canada.
During those years, I didn't understand calculus. / I didn't understand calculus during those years.
For some reason, I have trouble with foreign languages. / I have trouble with foreign languages for some reason.

2. It typically answers questions using words like ***how?*** *(with care)* ***where?*** *(in Canada)* ***when?*** *(during those years)* and ***why?*** *(for some reason).*

3. The verb in the VP does **not** "expect" the preposition . . . (See B3 below.)

B. It is a ***Predicate Complement (PC)*** if:

1. It is likely to appear only at the **end** of a clause (and can appear at the beginning only with extra emphasis -- i.e., extra loudness on the head noun in the NP):
*John talked to Mary / *To Mary John talked.*
*The solution depends on cooperation / *On cooperation the solution depends.*
*They voted for Reagan / *For Reagan they voted.*

2. It typically answers questions using words like *[prep.] who(m)?* (*. . . talked to whom?* . . . *talked to Mary*) or *[prep.] what?* (*. . . depends on what?* . . . *depends on cooperation*)

3. The verb in the VP **does** "expect" the preposition: *talk . . . to, about; depend . . . on; vote . . . for; look . . . at, for; . . .* Note especially that passive VPs expect *by*.


```
128  VP> HP1:                  + HP2: + HP3: + HP4: + MP:
129  VP> HP1:           + CC:  + HP2: + HP3: + HP4: + MP:
130  VP> HP1: + SN:            + HP2: + HP3: + HP4: + MP:
131  VP> HP1: + SN: + CC:      + HP2: + HP3: + HP4: + MP:

132  VP>                       HP2: + HP3:        + MP:
133  VP> HP2:           + CC:       + HP3:        + MP:
134  VP> HP2: + SN:                 + HP3:        + MP:
135  VP> HP2: + SN: + CC:           + HP3:        + MP:

136  VP>                       HP2:        + HP4: + MP:
137  VP> HP2:           + CC:            + HP4: + MP:
138  VP> HP2: + SN:                      + HP4: + MP:
139  VP> HP2: + SN: + CC:                + HP4: + MP:

140  VP>                       HP2: + HP3: + HP4: + MP:
141  VP> HP2:           + CC:       + HP3: + HP4: + MP:
142  VP> HP2: + SN:                 + HP3: + HP4: + MP:
143  VP> HP2: + SN: + CC:           + HP3: + HP4: + MP:

144  VP>                            HP3: + HP4: + MP:
145  VP> HP3:           + CC:            + HP4: + MP:
146  VP> HP3: + SN:                      + HP4: + MP:
147  VP> HP3: + SN: + CC:                + HP4: + MP:

                                    Choices in the Verb Phrase (& LVP>):

148                                 MP: V...(in the VP>)
149                                 MP: LV...(in the LVP>)

150                                 HP1: MAux...
151                                 HP2: PerfAux...
152                                 HP3: ProgAux...
153                                 HP4: PassAux...
154                                 HPR: ProAux...

155                                 CC: AdvP>
156                                 SN: Neg...

     Patterns in the Adjective Phrase:

157  AdjP>      H:
158  AdjP> M: + H:
159  AdjP>      H: + AdjPC:
160  AdjP> M: + H: + AdjPC:
                                    Choices in the Adjective Phrase:

161                                 H: Adj...
162                                 M: Int...
163                                 AdjPC: PP>

     Patterns in the Adverb Phrase:

164  AdvP> H:
165  AdvP> M: + H:
                                    Choices in the Adverb Phrase:

166                                 H: Adv...
```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NON-FINITE (TENSELESS) CLAUSES "VERBALS"

TYPE:	TYPICAL FUNCTIONS: (and examples):		FORM: (and how to identify):
1. Gerund Clause: (GerCl>)	S:	*Selling books is fun.*	V...*-ing* or L V...*-ing* without a preceding and related *am, is, are, was, were, be, being,* or *been.* (Answers questions that typically elicit S:, DO:, SC:, and OP:, e.g., *What is fun? She likes what?*)
	DO:	*She likes selling books.*	
	SC:	*Her hobby is selling books.*	
	OP:	*She became rich by selling books.*	
	. . .		
2. Present Participle Clause: (PrsParCl>):	PM:	*The woman selling books is my friend.*	V...*-ing* or L V...*-ing* without a preceding and related *am, is, are, was, were, be, being,* or *been.* (Follows a noun and answers questions like, *Which N...?* or *What kind of a N...?*)
3. Past Participle Clause: (PstParCl>)	PM:	*The book written by that woman is good.*	V...*-en* without a preceding and related *am, is, are, was, were, be, being,* or *been.* (Follows a noun and answers questions like, *Which N...?* or *What kind of a N...?*)
4. Infinitive Clause: (InfCl>):	S:	*To write books was her goal.*	*to* V... or *to* L V... (Can answer questions that typically elicit an S:, DO:, SC:, . . . e.g., *What was her goal? She likes what? . . . or . . .*)
	DO:	*She likes to write books.*	
	SC:	*Her goal was to write books.*	
	. . .		
	PM:	*She wanted an opportunity to write books.*	. . . can follow a noun and answer questions like, *Which N...?* or *What kind of a N...?* e.g., *Which opportunity?*)

78

82

010

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167                                     M: Int...

    Patterns in the Gerund Clause:

168 GerCl> P:
169 GerCl> P: + . . .
                                        Choices in the Gerund Clause:
170                                     P: Ger...
                                        . . .

    Patterns in the Present Participle Clause:

171 PrsParCl> P:
172 PrsParCl> P: + . . .
                                        Choices in the PrsParCl>:
173                                     P: PrsPar...
                                        . . .

    Patterns in the Past Participle Clause:

174 PstParCl> P:
175 PstParCl> P: + . . .
                                        Choices in the PstParCl>:
176                                     P: PstPar...
                                        . . .

    Patterns in the Infinitive Clause:

177 InfCl> R: + P:
178 InfCl> R: + P: + . . .
                                        Choices in the Infinitive Clause:
179                                     R: P...[to]
180                                     P: VP>
                                        . . .
    Patterns in that Clauses:
181 thatCl> . . .
                                        Choices in that Clauses:
182                                     . . .
    Patterns in Relative Clauses:
183 RelCl> . . .
                                        Choices in Relative Clauses:
184                                     . . .
    Patterns in Adverb Clauses:
185 AdvCl> . . .
                                        Choices in Adverb Clauses:
186                                     . . .
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83

011

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SOME SENTENCES FOR ANALYSIS

1. Green vegetables are beautiful.
2. The oldest buildings have become filthy slums.
3. Brilliant young doctors invented those new medical procedures.
4. Einstein's theories challenged science's earlier claims.
5. That young teacher's creative methods are effective.
6. The pipeline in that distant country crosses fields of thick ice.

7. Some children can conjugate Latin verbs.
8. We have been studying English grammar.
9. The British people have been being prepared for difficult economic times.
10. Those secrets should have been being guarded by the officials in that agency.
11. We have not finished our work.
12. The books should not have been left on the table.
13. John did not read the directive from headquarters.
14. The size of people's bank accounts does not have any relation to their creativity.

15. The investigators were suspicious.
16. After the accident, the drive felt very guilty.
17. My plans are quite similar to yours.
18. I am not completely sure of that candidate's commitment to energy conservation.
19. My neighbors seemed happy about the price of their new car.

20. Advertisers should plan their commercials carefully.
21. Just yesterday, some burglers stole my toothbrush.
22. The cost of living has quite literally doubled in the past decade.
23. Throughout the centuries, the creative talents of large numbers of women must surely have been wasted.

24. Quite secretly, a group of that candidate's coworkers has been listening to propaganda from the opposition.
25. After the end of this session, the senator will have been a loyal member of Congress for a long time.
26. Earlier, the coach had been showing the players the other team's plays.
27. A teacher of young children should be very careful about their feelings.
28. The American ambassador to England should have sent the Prince of Wales this country's congratulations on the birth of the Queen's new grandson.

29. Discussing problems is essential for young married couples.
30. Children like building sand castles.
31. To strengthen the rule of law should be a legislator's goal.
32. We gave Kathy some models to build for her brother.
33. The car hit a woman wearing dark glasses.
34. A car stolen in Texas was found in Maryland.
35. An enjoyable aspect of the study of linguistics is learning about diagrams.
36. Some professional athletes want to earn millions of dollars.
37. A book written by our professor is available in the bookstore.
38. that woman sitting in the rear of the auditorium may be our next president.
39. The agent with responsibility for planning the tour hopes to give students recruited by the agency an experience matching their fondest dreams.

012

(Yes/no interrogative clauses [IntCl>])

40. Has John taken the tapes?
41. Did the driver finish the race?

(WH interrogative clauses [IntCl>])

42. What has the musician composed?
43. Who can paint the house?
44. Why did Helen sell her car?

(Declarative nominal clauses [NCl>])

45. That Joe will pass the test is clear.
46. It is clear that Joe will pass the test.

(Yes/no interrogative nominal clauses [NCl>])

47. I wonder whether John has taken the tapes.
48. I do not know whether the driver has finished the race.
(48.' I am not sure whether . . .)

(WH interrogative nominal clauses [NCl>])

49. I wonder what the musician composed.
50. I know who can paint the house.
51. I do not know why Helen sold her car.

(Relative Clauses [RelCl>])

52a. We bought the book which Mary wrote.
52b. We bought the book that Mary wrote.
52c. We bought the book Mary wrote.
53a. Our neighbors know a woman who flies jets.
53b. Our neighbors know a woman that flies jets.

013

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THREE DIMENSIONSAL DIAGRAMMING --NO PEN OR PAPER ALLOWED!

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Using their own bodies to diagram sentences makes students aware of

the major elements of a sentence,
the crucial role of the verb in a sentence,
the relationship between sentence parts, and
the various roles of modifiers in a sentence.

Body diagramming is especially useful for demonstrating the difference in active, pasive, linking, and intransitive verbs.

TO BEGIN

The leader supplies students with a set of cards. When put together properly, the cards make a sentence. As students arrange themselves, they are learning word order and minimal modification--e.g., "the" goes with something; it can't stand alone.

Students must figure out how to "act" the sentence. Major characters must stand out from the others. (Ideally, they stand on a small riser, but simply putting them in front of everyone else will work.) Only four major characters are possible: subjects, verbs, complements, and objects. These four must "show" the basic sentence. Minor characters are modifiers of all kinds. They attach themselves to the words they modify and indicate their minor status in some way. It's best to start with quite simple sentences.

Example: Subject - Verb - Object

(John hit the wall.)

"The" and "wall" might stand with an arm around each other's waist, to show they must stay together.

"John" might mime a fist headed towards the verb, or even actually strike the verb gently.

"Hit" might continue "John's" motion, aiming at "the wall" or striking it gently. "The wall" might simply stand still or move slightly to show impact.

Good questions to accompany this act: Is there any action in this sentence? Who or what starts the action? Did the action stop there? No? Who or what received the action? Was the action TRANSFERRED from the subject to a word after the verb? What does "trans" mean?

Example: Subject - Verb - Subject Complement (Terrie is a beautiful dancer.)

"A" and "beautiful" and "dancer" form a unit.

"Terrie" takes no action, might just stand still.

"Is" links "Terrie" and "a beautiful dancer"--possibly just by holding hands with each.

"A beautiful dancer" might simply hold hands with "is" or might reach behind "is" to hold hand with "Terrie."

Good questions to accompany this act: Is there any action in this sentence? Can you "is" anything? Is anyone doing something? Having something? Being something? What function does the verb perform? What is the relationship between the word before the verb and the word after it? Could you say the word after the verb COMPLETES some idea about the word before the verb?

There is no "right" way to show these relationships. Part of the learning takes place as students try to figure out the best way to make an indirect object clear -- and to act out the difference between "Ted gave Sally a rose" and "Ted gave a rose to Sally." Two groups facing each other to work out "The fish smelled funny" and "The cat smelled the fish" will soon see the difference between a subject complement and a direct object.

NEXT

Add modifiers. The leader can supply a few to get things started, but students should figure out a way to show what word in the sentence they must attach themselves to. Acting out sentences like "Mom put the bread on the counter" and "The bread on the counter is stale" makes very clear the difference in a prepositional phrase used as an adjective and one used as an adverb. (If students are really good at this, they can handle the difference between "Mom is in the kitchen" and "Mom is in a good mood," where the prepositional phrase has the unusual opportunity to be a major character, a subject complement!) Noun modifiers become clear: "in my breakfast cereal box" provides the pronoun/determiner "my" hanging on to [read: modifying] a three-word construction in which the noun "breakfast" goes with [read:modifies] the noun "cereal" that belongs to [read: modifies] the noun "box."

Adverbial objectives can clearly be seen as nouns that act like adverbs when "This week" has to attach to "are going" in "This week we are going to New York." Infinitive and participle phrase modification also becomes clear.

NEXT

Build total sentences. At first, the leader can supply a fairly long sentence with many parts, even handing out the cards in order. Discussion often ensues when the student attaches to the wrong (or right!) word in the sentence, discussion from which the leader can determine what ideas or relationships are not yet clear to the students.

Finally, students create their own sentences, trying to use every student in the group. One student starts by standing up front and saying any subject or verb word. The next student must add whichever of these two words the first did not use. After that, one student at a time may add a word or a phrase anywhere it makes sense. After each addition, the actors must "read" the entire sentence as it now stands, either together or with actors reading only the word(s) they have contributed. Example:

[Noun, Subject]
1 Josh -- stands on main line

[Verb]
2 drove -- stands on main line,
can't gesture yet
Both read"Josh drove."

[Noun phrase, direct object]
3 his new car -- stands on main line.
Now "Josh" mimes action toward "drove" and "drove" mimes it toward
"his new car." "His new car" may stand still or mime receiving action.
All read"Josh drove his new car."

[Pro./determiner + noun modifier]
4 My brother -- attaches self to "Josh"
All: "My brother Josh drove his new car."

[Prep.Ph./Adv.]
5 to the mall -- attaches self to "drove"
All: "My brother Josh drove his new car to the mall."

[Noun/Adverb]
6 last night -- attaches self to "drove"
All: "My brother Josh drove his new car to the mall last night."

[toV/Adverb]
7 to get a pizza -- attaches self to "drove"
All: "My brother Josh drove his new car to the mall last night to get a pizza."

[Prep.Ph/Adv. modifying toV]
8 for our supper -- attaches self to "get"
All: "My brother Josh drove his new car to the mall last night to get a pizza for our supper."

[Noun modifier]
9 pepperon i-- attaches self to "pizza"
All: "My brother Josh drove his new car to the mall last night to get a pepperoni pizza for our supper."

[Prep.Ph/Adj.]
10 with extra cheese -- attaches self to "pizza"
All:" My brother Josh drove his new car to the mall last night to get a pepperoni pizza with extra cheese for our supper."

[Note: About this time, someone will suggest reading the "last night" first. Fine. "Last night, my brother Josh drove his new car to the mall to get a pepperoni pizza with extra cheese for our supper."]

[Prep.Ph/Adv.]
11 in the rain -- attaches self to "drove"
All: "Last night my brother Josh drove his new car to the mall in the rain to get a pepperoni pizza with extra cheese for our supper."

[Adj.]
12 nice -- attaches self to "brother"
All: "Last night my nice brother Josh drove his new car to the mall in the rain to get a pepperoni pizza with extra cheese for our supper."

[Intensifier]
13 very -- attaches self to "nice"
All: "Last night my very nice brother Josh drove his new car to the mall in the rain to get a pepperoni pizza with extra cheese for our supper."

[Pres.Part. Phrase]
14 Wearing only his swim trunks -- attaches self to "Josh"
All: "Last night my very nice brother Josh, wearing only his swim trunks, drove his new car to the mall in the rain to get a pepperoni pizza with extra cheese for our supper."

[Adjective]
15 ragged -- attaches self to "trunks"
All: "Last night my very nice brother Josh, wearing only his ragged swim trunks, drove his new car to the mall in the rain to get a pepperoni pizza with extra cheese for our supper."

...ad infinitum!

Deciding where to attach oneself often produces learning not absorbed from lectures and text -- e.g., #14 might first attach "in the rain" to "Josh" or "night" or "car," giving others the chance to ask "Does 'in the rain' go better with 'Josh' than with any other word? Does it tell what kind of or which Josh?"

Students can add whole clauses if they wish -- e.g., student 16 could add "Because he is such a nice guy" and attach it to "drove." The technique works very well for pointing out the different roles of clauses -- as adverb, adjective, and noun. Students see that each clause has its own sentence pattern, with a subject and a verb, and that each clause must either attach to a word in the main clause or serve as a subject, object, or complement in that clause. Part of the fun derives from the fact that clauses require students to devise some means of indicating the role of the clause marker. Relative pronouns can get quite complicated -- they need a connection to their antecedent but they also need to function as a part of the subordinate clause's sentence pattern!

For learning basic English sentence patterns or advanced rhetorical variations of those patterns, body diagramming provides a useful activity for students of the language.

A SAMPLE SET OF VERY SIMPLE SENTENCES

/ /The fish/ /in the pan/ / /smelled /.
/ ss pp / /
S Vi

/ /The fish/ /in the pan/ /smelled/ /funny/.
/ ss pp / / / /
S Vl SC

/ /The cat/ /on the porch/ / /smelled/ /the fish/.
/ ss/ / pp / / /
/ /
S Vt
DO

/The fish/ /was smelled/ /by the cat/.
S Vp pp

/We/ /considered/ /the fish/ /spoiled/.
S Vt DO OC

/We/ /gave/ /the cat/ /the fish/.
S Vt IO DO

Some verbs lend themselves very well to demonstrating the difference the verb makes in the sentence -- for example, "grow."

S-V
Corn grows rapidly in good soil and climate.

S-V-DO
My farmer son grows corn in his fields.

S-V-SC
The corn grows tall and straight.

S-V-DO-OC
He grows the corn full-eared and pesticide-free.

S-V-IO-DO
He grows his special customers Silver Queen white corn.

"What does the phrase modify?" sentences can be fun, too.

The vase on the table belongs to the museum.

Please put the vase on the table.

Please put the vase on the table on the bookcase.

Approaches to Teaching Teachers Grammar

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Although most of the discussions at this conference focus on the teaching of grammar to students of writing, my interest in grammar relates to teacher preparation, particularly teachers of junior high and high school students. I have been teaching grammar to prospective English teachers at Illinois State University for about twenty years now. Anybody who has taught grammar for so many years must either like it or have no choice. In my case, it happens to be a bit of both. I like grammar and the challenge of teaching it, and until recently, nobody else in the department really wants to teach it. Now the reasons I start off on such a negative note are quite obvious. It shouldn't surprise you that every semester, I start out with a new group of grammar students with several obstacles to overcome. The first obstacle is that almost nobody likes grammar; second, it's a required course for most of the students who enroll in it; third, they arrive in the course with little recall of what grammar they had learned previously and thinking the course would be a boring rehash of the same old stuff. Fourth, they are insecure about not knowing grammar and expect the course not only to teach them grammar but also to teach them how to teach grammar. Fifth, there is too much they don't know and need to know to be taught in a single semester course. And finally, to make matters even worse, the instructor actually grades on a 5-point scale and they have to earn a C to be certified. So the students usually arrive in class with the eager anticipation of undergoing a root canal. Needless to say, teaching the course has been a constant struggle throughout the years. No matter what I did, I never felt that the majority of the students left the course with the subject matter firmly in control. Of course, there was the usual number of A's and B's, but even some of them might not have learned much more than learning to perform well in the exams. I wanted them to leave the course with some real, unforgettable insights about the structure of language, but I had no confidence that they did. I worried even more about the low C's since I was certifying them to teach in the schools, and I sincerely hoped the D's and F's would change their majors. It was apparent that some students learned more easily than others, but I did not like the idea that some people will never learn grammar. I was optimistic enough to think that given the right approach, our students can learn formal grammar, although with various degrees of success. But no matter what and how hard I tried, I could never feel that I had been successful with the majority of my students. It didn't help of course that grammar teaching throughout the seventies and eighties was taking a back seat in the composition classes. Much of the research in grammar teaching was telling them that it wasn't useful in improving writing ability. So they took the course, no doubt hoping that they would never have to teach it in their own classes.

In recent years, in an effort to improve

my success rate in teaching grammar, I began to wonder about how my students learn grammar. I was convinced that the negative findings of grammar teaching in composition research assumed too much that the teaching of grammar in the schools is competent and that learning takes place. I felt that if my students, who are prospective teachers of English, have so much trouble learning grammar, how can we assume that the students in junior high or high school would find it any easier or can make it work for them? Before we can even ask the question of the effectiveness of the teaching of grammar, we have to find out whether grammar is learned when it is taught, and if it isn't, why it isn't. Perhaps the lack of learning and the dislike of grammar can be attributed to the poor teaching of grammar. And the poor teaching of grammar in the schools can probably be attributed to the teachers' own dislike and/or inadequate learning of grammar. In other words, we need to know more about the learning of grammar by beginning with the teachers or the prospective teachers.

Thus, my interest shifted from improving my teaching to trying to understand how my students learn. At about the time that I got interested in finding out how my students learn grammar, I was introduced to the idea of different learning preferences through the Myers-Briggs theory of personality types. My colleague Jan Neuleib and I decided we would try to find out if different learning preferences could also be found in the learning of grammar and if they could also account for differences in grammar learning ability. Last summer at our first meeting, I reported on our first set of findings - that Sensing and Intuitive types do approach learning grammar differently. The Sensing type prefers a more concrete, hands-on, step-by-step approach with plenty of examples to learn grammatical concepts. The Intuitive type finds theory and abstraction more interesting and can make connections and transfer generalizations to new examples more easily but find working with details tedious and boring. Other personality preferences also seem to correlate with differences in work style; introverts are able to focus on the learning task more intensely and for a longer period of time and extroverts like working with other people. We also learned that the majority of our students - being future teachers in language arts and English - are NF's and many are extraverted (Brosnahan and Neuleib, 71). As an NT myself, knowing there is this difference between my students and me has helped me to discover some new teaching strategies which seem to have brought about the most positive responses to grammar I have ever had.

Apart from the MB types and grammar learning preferences, our research on grammar learning has also revealed insights about their problems and attitudes in studying grammar through the use of a grammar questionnaire, a grammar test, and student journals kept throughout the semester. This paper reports on the information provided by 20 grammar students this past spring semester. In describing their past grammar learning experience, the students reported an average of 2.7 school <u>levels</u>, not years, of exposure to grammar instruction. The grammatical activities most frequently reported were diagramming of sentences, memorizing of grammatical terms and labelling parts of a sentence, and correcting errors, each with 17 to 19 responses. They rated their own grammatical ability at an average of 3.17 overall (See Appendix 1). Despite the substantial exposure to grammatical instruction and a certain amount of self-confidence in grammatical knowledge, their performance in the grammar test was disappointing. In the grammar test, the students were to identify a number of grammatical forms and functions in a short narrative-descriptive passage of about 160 words (See Appendix 2). First, they were to count the number of simple sentences in the passage. None of the students picked out just

the six simple sentences. Interestingly enough, the majority left out the two simple sentences that contain verbals but no dependent clauses (eleven students left out both sentence 2 and 11, and four left out sentence 2 or 11). In counting the number of clauses in the passage, only one student gave the correct answer of 17 clauses, four students did not attempt an answer, eleven students gave answers ranging from two to six, with most of them picking three clauses. It puzzled me for a while why they would count fewer clauses than sentences, and then it occurred to me that most of them had learned clauses to mean dependent clauses, which is an example of confusing terminology in traditional school grammar. Warriner's defines a clause as "a group of words that contains a verb and its subject and is used as a part of a sentence," and then proceeds to define an independent clause (96). This kind of definition is misleading because it mixes form and function, a confusion which is typical of traditional school grammar. This confusion is further evidenced by the students, responses to the other questions in the test which call for identifying form and function of subordinate clauses, preposition phrases, and infinitive phrases. Most of them could neither pick out the right forms nor identify the functions, with the exception of preposition phrases. About eight or nine students picked out correctly preposition phrases used as adjective or adverb. The rest of the answers were either wrong or simply left blank. Their general lack of knowledge regarding the important distinction between form and function is also reflected in the lowest average for items (e) and (f) in the self-rating of grammatical knowledge; the average for (e) - distinguishing between form and function - is 2.26 and the average for (f) - distinguishing between deep and surface structure - is 2.3, which suggest that these terms are below recognition level for the group. Of course, many of them commented that they had simply forgotten what they had learned. That is of course possible, though I am inclined to think that if it had been really learned, they are too young to have forgotten it! Another possibility is that they had never really understood or liked the grammar that was taught. I suppose it would not be unfair to say that no other subject in the school curriculum is generally taught with less enthusiasm, less commitment, and less conviction. Judging from my students, responses to the questionnaire, the test, and what they tell me in their journals, I would say the teaching of grammar in the schools is, in general, still an unmitigated disaster.

Here are some generalizations that I have arrived at about what and how it is taught:

1. The approach is prescriptive and usually deductive. The objective is to teach enough grammatical terminology to enable students to memorize usage rules and to punctuate correctly. This emphasis is evident in the highest averages of student self-rating given to items (g), (h), and (i), regarding knowledge of standard grammatical usage, correct punctuation, and punctuation rules, with averages of 3.65, 4.05. and 3.95, respectively.

2. The teaching of grammar is not systematic. Much of it is in bits and pieces, with confusing terminology and vague distinctions. Warriner's definition of the independent clause is a good case in point.

> An independent (or main) clause expresses a complete thought and can stand by itself as a sentence. If you can recognize a sentence, you will have no trouble recognizing independent clauses.
>
> Independent clauses are sentences when they stand alone. They are usually called independent clauses only when they are part of a sentence (96-97).

This kind of illogical definition can only make sense to a student if he or she already knows what an independent clause or a sentence is. To show the ill-logic of this definition, we can use an analogy and substitute person and adult wherever independent clause and sentence appear, respectively, thus:

> A person expresses a complete thought and can stand by himself or herself as an adult. If you can recognize an adult, you will have no trouble recognizing persons. Persons are adults when they stand alone. They are usually called persons only when they are part of an adult.

No doubt some students can infer the difference between independent clauses and sentences by looking at the examples and simply pay no attention to the definition. But there are some students, especially Sensing students, who need concrete, specific definitions to understand abstract concepts. This kind of definition serves only to frustrate them and keep them from acquiring an interest in grammar. Furthermore, the use of the same terms such as "noun" and "adjective" to mean both form (meaning of word?) and function is another major source of frustration and confusion. For example, preposition phrases, infinitive phrases, participial phrases, and gerund phrases are taught as if they were all unique and unambiguous terms. It took me a long time to convince my students that preposition phrases and infinitive phrases are types of phrases in form and can have different functions, that "participial phrase" is ambiguous (can be a form term or a function term), and "gerund phrase" indicates both form and function.

3. Grammar is taught with easy examples and the labelling of parts of speech functions oversimplifies sentence structure and promotes a linear concept of it. The important concepts of constituent structure and recursiveness of structures are neglected. In exercises on subordinate clauses, for example, each sentence usually contains one subordinate clause that is neatly separable from the main clause, e.g.

> Skin diving is a sport (that is now becoming very popular).

Although an example like this does illustrate an adjective clause, it provides no insight regarding the recursive embedding of clauses, such as the following example illustrates:

> I have a student (who complains about teachers [who fail him (when he does no work)])

The examples also often do not provide for "violations" of the general definition. A case in point is the definition of "phrases," which are defined as not containing a verb and its subject, a definition that is "violated" by the following participal phrase:

> (Occurring [as it does (when people least expect it)]), his behavior is rather bizarre.

4. And finally, the most discouraging phenomenon of all, grammar is usually taught as if it's a bitter pill to be administered quickly, with the hope that the "cure" will take place (See Appendix 3 - Comments from student journals about previous grammar learning).

It's no wonder that whatever they've learned in high school or junior high usually doesn't stick; there's usually not much to relate to and there's no reason to hang onto something that was disliked in the first place. Having "forgotten" most of it, many of my students enter the course expecting to learn more of the same thing, hoping this time they would understand it because they'll have to

teach it. They also think that the purpose of studying grammar is to help them to use "correct" English (most of them define the term "grammar" as rules of proper usage.)

My idea of a grammar course for future teachers is much more ambitious than that. I want them not only to develop a good understanding of the structure of the language but also to develop an interest in the subject matter and to like studying it. So taking into consideration everything I have learned about the students, grammar learning experience, learning preferences, learning capability, etc., I've arrived at several principles of grammar teaching which I experimented with this last term. I'm very optimistic about my "new" approach because I had the most positive responses in the student journals last term:

1. Inductive teaching is better than deductive teaching. Since the definitions of grammatical terms and concepts are usually vague and/or ambiguous, it is best not to use them as a heuristic device. The best way to treat them is to admit that they are general guidelines and not logical definitions. Thus, it is better to present examples first and to form generalizations from the examples. The Sensing students in particular need a lot of specific examples to relate general principles to.

2. The teacher needs to use teaching strategies that focus on general grammatical concepts and processes and not just particular grammatical features, such as form vs. function, form vs. meaning, constituent structures, recursiveness of language, and transformational operations. Focusing on concepts and processes gives students a better understanding of how language works and gives them the necessary tools for further analysis or use of language.

3. The teacher needs to help students relate unconscious grammar to conscious grammar by using generative-inductive strategies. This approach is particularly effective in getting students interested in studying how language works. Unlike prescriptive grammar, which assumes students don't "know" their language and often subscribes to usage rules that are counter-intuitive to even standard users of the language, descriptive grammar attempts to make explicit what is implicit in unconscious linguistic knowledge. And the fact that this description is usually based on the "standard" makes it possible for students to benefit from discussions of "standard" usage, much of which they already know, without getting frustrated by the "unreal" rules of prescriptive grammar, such as rules prohibiting beginning a sentence with and, or, or but, or ending a sentence with a preposition. But the real benefit of drawing out their unconscious knowledge is that students end up liking the study of grammar because they gain confidence regarding what they already know.

4. The teacher needs to provide plenty of hands-on interactional activities. One of the insights that I have gained from our study on learning preferences is that Extraverted and Feeling students, who constitute the majority of students in English education, like to learn from a great deal of shared hands-on group activities (See Appendix 4).

Let me show you a few examples of new teaching strategies that I used in my grammar class this past semester. I'm sure I was not the first one to try them, but I felt I was being reckless. I gave up quite a bit of my authority. I used to do a lot of lecturing. I did it deductively by starting with good definitions first and then giving examples. Sometimes I would do the reverse. But more often than not, there was a lot of repetition of explanations and additional examples. More recently, ever since I started reading their journals, I began to focus more on how they are contributing to the learning process. Thus, putting the above principles into practice, I changed

my teaching approach. Instead of giving them examples and answers, I set up heuristic tasks which would guide them to produce the data and to discuss what they had discovered, and they would work in small groups of two to four. I call this the inductive-generative approach because they are working from the examples they have produced themselves. For example, when we were working on derivation of words, instead of providing them with a list of noun-forming, adjective-forming suffixes, etc., I provide the source words and they have to come up with derived words and tell me what form classes they belong to. Another example is a partial chart of the pronoun paradigm provided in a grid indicating person, number, case, and gender, for which the students have to fill in the missing words. Another technique I use is sentence combining for analyzing the surface forms of sentences with more than one underlying string.

The results are very gratifying. My students love it. The Extroverts obviously love the group work, but the Introverts also like being able to get comfortable working with one or two other people on a regular basis. I love it too because they help one another to discover the answers and that saves me a lot of explanations. And to my surprise, we spend no more time doing group work in class than what I used to spend repeating explanations and providing further examples. But the most gratifying aspect of this is that they started talking about enjoying grammar and feeling more confident about it. I had always thought that a good description of grammar should be intrinsically interesting, but that's the logic of a Thinking person. It is now quite apparent to me that since most of my students are Feeling types, they need to like it to learn it. That means coming up with activities they enjoy, preferably interactive ones, and they will learn (See Appendix 5).

These are just a few of the activities that I used last term to get my students to discover grammatical concepts and structures for themselves. I plan to use more of them in the future. My ultimate objective is for them to realize that learning formal grammar is simply discovering how to talk about what they already know unconsciously and that it does not have to be a painful process. In fact, it could be an interesting and enjoyable process.

References

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Appendix 1

Grammar Questionnaire

1. Name:_____
2. Major:_____
   Minor:_____
3. What is your definition of grammar?

4. At what grade level(s) did your teachers teach grammar? (Circle more than one if applicable).

   Grade School Junior High
   High School College Never

5. If you were taught grammar, how was it taught? (Check more than one if applicable).

_____ a. Diagramming of sentences.
_____ b. Memorizing of grammatical terms

and labelling parts of a sentence.

_____ c. Filling in exercises in grammar books,

_____ d. Writing sentences with grammatical forms indicated (e.g. fill in adjectives, etc.)

_____ e. Writing paragraphs with grammatical forms indicated.

_____ f. Sentence-combining exercises.

_____ g. Identifying and correcting grammatical errors in grammar workbooks.

_____ h. Identifying and correcting grammatical errors in your own writing.

_____ i. Identifying and correcting grammatical errors in other people's writing.

_____ j. Discussing the structure of English.

_____ k. Comparing English grammar to the grammar of a foreign language.

_____ l. Other (Please specify).

6. Rate your knowledge of the following areas on a scale of 1 to 5. (1 means no knowledge, 3 means you recognize the terms or concepts, and 5 means you can explain terms and concepts to someone else with some confidence).

a. Knowing names of parts of speech._____
b. Identifying parts of speech. _____
c. Knowing names of parts of a sentence._____
d. Identifying parts of a sentence._____
e. Distinguishing between form and function. _____
f. Distinguishing between deep and surface structure. _____
g. Knowing standard grammatical usage. _____
h. Knowing correct punctuation. _____
i. Knowing punctuation rules. _____
j. Knowing stylistic choices in vocabulary. _____
k. Knowing stylistic choices in syntax. _____

Appendix 2

Grammar Test*

I. Read the following passage and answer the questions below it:

(1) Several years ago my friend Joey and I tried to go to the moon, but some apples and pears got in our way. (2) Both Joey and I had seen a television program about man's efforts to reach the moon. (3) When we talked about the program, we agreed that the important thing was to get up enough speed to overcome the earth's gravity. (4) The rest would be easy. (5) We decided to make an experiment. (6) There was a long block in our neighborhood that ran downhill and then uphill. (7) If we took Joey's wagon and got up enough speed going downhill, we might be able to leave the earth going uphill. . .

(8) The story has a sad ending. (9) Out of our allowances we paid $3.40 for the fresh fruit that Mr. Loomis lost. (10) Joey's wagon had a big dent in it. (11) I was spanked for sneaking out of the house in the early morning.

II. Answer the following questions:

1. Which sentences in the passage are <u>simple sentences</u>? (You may use the numbers in parentheses at the beginning of each sentence).

2. How many clauses are there in the whole passage?

3. How did you identify clauses?

Find an example from the passage to illustrate each of the following (Please write it out):

4. a <u>subordinate (dependent) clause</u> that functions <u>as a noun</u> -

5. a subordinate (dependent) clause that functions as an adjective -

6. a subordinate (dependent) clause that functions as an adverb -

7. a preposition phrase used as an adjective -

8. a preposition phrase used as an adverb -

9. an infinitive phrase used as an adjective -

10. an infinitive phrase used as a noun -

III. Which questions were you unable to answer because they contain terms and/or concepts you are not familiar with?

Identify by number:

Comments?

*Test passage is adapted from Warriner's English Grammar and Composition 8, rev. ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959, 362-63.

Appendix 3

Quotes from student journals: previous grammar learning

Jeanine: My own experience of learning grammar has been largely prescriptive. . . Traditional methods resulted in grammar rules and parts of speech were memorized.

Colleen: In junior high, grammar class mainly consisted of picking out the subject and verb in a sentence.

Deanna: I don't understand what adjectival means. I never heard the word before I took this class.

Melissa: I remember being extremely confused in high school by the traditional grammar.

Alison: In high school we were never taught the distinction between form and function

Tracy: Most of us, if not all, learned grammar through the function of words, not the forms of them. . .I can't believe there is so much to grammar. High school just taught the typical rules and that was it. There are so many other details to look at.

Susan: It is kind of odd that it took 15 years of schooling to finally figure out that what I learned way back in the beginning wasn't right.

Alison: After our first traditional grammar exercise on subjects and predicates, it is obvious to see why students don't understand prescriptive grammar. Most often in primary schools we are taught that subjects are nouns and nouns are a person, a place, or a thing.

Appendix 4

Quotes from students journals: responses to activities

Colleen: Class discussion and group work help a lot. . . The way you have turned the learning (TG) into a step process really makes it easy to understand. . . I enjoy coming to class. Great learning experience and fun. I'm very thankful I have had this class.

Mike: For the most part, I think this class is very beneficial for people who are going to teach grammar. The balance between group work and individual work is very good.

Jeanine: For me doing the exercises has actually been fun because they challenge me to apply some concepts that I'm now learning.

Tina: I've become much more confident about my knowledge of grammar.

John: I feel more learning is taking place in this class than in my other classes.

Julie: My homework has been fun. I think part of it could be the variety of activities that keep my interest. . . I'm glad we have group discussions in class. . . Getting to know other people lets me know how I am doing.

Deanna: I liked working in groups because I felt like it helped me to understand the course material better.

Jeni: I'm finding this class more and more interesting. I don't say "What is the point of learning this" to myself anymore.

Debby: . . . the majority of my elementary and high school teachers should be shot. . .I enjoy doing exercises in groups and on the board. It makes the class more interesting when we can be involved.

Melissa: I like the way you use the class to be part of the teaching. I've always felt that active learning is much more successful than just lecture, passive learning. . . It seems much easier when I'm able to work with someone else and figure out the answers. . . I'm really enjoying this class. This is not what I expected of a grammar class. I was really dreading it, but now I've come to actually like working with grammar.

Stacey: I have not enjoyed working in class with other people. I'm sure others in the class do not have this problem. I end up working with the same person.

Susan: I like the way you started the lesson (morphology) by us actually thinking up examples and then having to decide what the base word was made it sink in more than if it was all lecture form. . . Working together in class also makes it easier to catch on. You can talk about it and work it out together. Two heads are better than one.

Appendix 5

Quotes from student journals: responses to course content

Colleen: I really wish in high school my teachers took on an approach like the one you are with us. . . Having us get into groups, work in class and write on the chalkboard realy seem to help me get a better grasp of all of it.. . . I'm learning a lot everyday when studying TG. . . If I had a chance and would make an impact, I'd let my old school district know what's going on or what's not going on. TG really makes a difference.

Heather: I'm finding what we are studying in this class to be very interesting. . . I've learned a lot this semester. . . What I've learned in TG is carrying over to traditional grammar.

Jolyn: Language study opens doors. Things that were taken for granted, in fact not even considered, are learned. . . Sentence patterns have brought my attention to ypes of verbs. . . Sentence combining is interesting and can also be very beneficial.

Jeanine: The morphology of words is something that is very new to me. . . Probably the most important thing that I have learned in this grammar class is the distinction between form and function of both words and word phrases. . . I have more confidence now when it comes to grammar.

John: I expected the class to be similar to high school grammar classes. I did not expect that we would be covering sounds.

Deanna: This is my first class in which I have been presented with phonetics.

Debby: One thing I didn't realize that I see now is that there are many more sounds than letters in our language. Now it seems obvious, but I don't think I would have seen it that way before this class.

Jeni: I haven't had grammar of any sort since 9th grade. I had thought the prescriptive theories were the only ways to approach grammar.

Brian: I never realized there are two different "th" sounds. . . When we have been going over many of the components of syntax, I often find myself thinking "I know that."

Holly: I think I like TG better than traditional grammar which I have learned all my life.

Melissa: I really like TG so much better than how I learned traditional grammar in school. This is so much more understandable.

Stacey: I think the transformation rules are very interesting and beneficial. I never realized before how I actually make sentences.

Brian: TG diagramming has been very helpful for me when identifying the different components of a sentence. . . In junior high we did traditional linear diagramming. As I recall, it seems that in that type of diagramming success was based on whether or not you could remember what each word fell into what category. What I like about TG diagramming is that you are always aware of your options. . . TG diagramming can also lead to more creative synthesis of sentences.

Lisa: I always knew that languages have rules, but I never thought about it being scientific.

Grammar Relevance: Human/Computer Interface as a Relevancy Model

Frank Peters

When grammar is taught either in an introductory fashion to freshmen composition students or in an advanced class aimed at preparing the teacher candidate to teach grammar, the question of grammar's relevance arises. Though traditional relevancy models suggesting language improvement, knowledge of linguistic patterns and procedures, or need to apply grammar in future teaching offer incentive to students, these often skirt the issue of how grammar is specifically task and job relevant. Evidence of human/computer interface, on the other hand, clearly indicates how grammatical principles and relationships are used in the development of computer programs, the processing of knowledge, and extension of the human mind. From job control language, to menuing, to production of a finished text or computation, computer interaction relies on grammar to make information flow, to allow humans to "converse" with the machine. Since computer/human interaction is so obviously grammar dependent, even a brief overview of the interrelationship indicates to students how grammar relates directly to their futures as teachers of natural and artificial language, as future programmers, as users of machines which they might prefer to control rather than have control them. Such an overview of the grammatical systems underlying, for example, the computational command system aids the student to realize the grammatical import and force of what appear to be isolated command words and figures. Even such a simple example generates an appreciation of grammar in use, an appreciation more genuine than that which the traditional relevancy models can provide.

Though computer programmers and theorists tend to think of interface as a mathematical procedure and of the phrases found in programs as either isolated words or as "syntactic sugar", the recognizable wording and phrasing in computerese is in fact language and as such, obviously, has grammatical structure. When this grammatical structure is identified, it can be compared with the grammatical structure in other more frequently encountered language texts, thereby giving the classroom student a significant model for investigating the relevance of grammar in practical, employment related texts, and for seeking other similar practical models of grammar.

Perhaps we should begin by putting the language used in computing in perspective. Historically computerese derives from the need, when numerical sequence commands became too elaborate for human operators to use without costly mistakes occurring, to fit computer numerical commanding (termed job-controlling in computer jargon) to the more usual human mode of communicating, i.e. via language. During the 1950s, simple translation of numerical commands was accomplished by applying algebraic symbolizing technique to the complex number sequences that were and still are, at base operational level, the machine code commands. The

SAVE number became S, RUN became R, DELETE WITHOUT COPYING was D, and COPY AND DELETE was W. One reason computing specialists today equate computer language development to an essentially algebraic function is that primitive job control commands were assigned or reduced to algebra-like single letters or short letter combinations. As programming technique developed and job-controlling became more complex, letter commands were combined into short sentences occasionally in a form similar to algebraic propositions or equations. In a third stage of development, more English phrases were introduced as fewer users were programming qualified. Today's computer programmers often speak disparagingly of the English in the more advanced languages as "syntactic sugar", wording added to allow the uninitiated non-programmer users to interface with the machine. What has evolved through five generations of programming development is an "artificial language" system composed of individual "languages" and "dialects" operating at various levels of interface. Though this system has been termed "artificial language", it is better described as "computerese" or "pidgin" (Slator, Anderson, Conley, 1986) since it is more like human "natural" language than computing specialists seem to realize. One simply need consider the target audience or consumer of computerese to understand how it is more linguistic than computational. A computer operates entirely via computations and is, at base level, instructed to perform all functions by number sequences typed or otherwise piped into the machine. Since humans, whether they are programmers or not, are at a loss to remember the numbers or sequences accurately, humans alone have need of a language-like command system. Human users mistakenly make the assumption that they "talk" to the machine when in fact they "talk" to themselves; but whenever "talking" occurs, grammar is used. Language forms directed to the human user and interpreted by that user as "talk" are in fact programmed response forms which, because their basis is in language, exhibit English grammar. An example of programmed response form is to be found in the last line of the following instruction in operating language C,

```
int useon6 (x) int (*x)[]; {return(x[6];}
int thex[10];
useon6 (&thex); {*"&" is the LV
        operator*}
```

where the partial English sentence can be assigned a subject and flashed to the user. What is of interest for the present discussion is that the "syntactic sugar", like useon6, indicates English grammar is used also for instructing the machine. What interface represents is the translation of computerese into the numerical units necessary for machine instruction; and the translation process is almost entirely syntax based.

If the suggested comparison of computerese to a pidgin is given extended consideration, the process of communicating with the computer can be described in terms of the pidginization process, the reduction of a specific language to base communicational units. English is piginized, or syntactically reduced, to allow contact with the computer. As contact grows into fuller communication, computerese depidginizes, creolizes and decreolizes while developing syntactically to become more like target language English. Just as decreolization range is detectable in natural language pidgins and creoles, it is obvious that a similar decreolization continuum, like those outlined for English-based and other natural language pidgins and creoles by the sociolinguists, exists for computerese. Lehrberger (1986, p. 35) offers a model of computer operational and sub-language relationships which is interestingly similar to sociolinguistic models of pidgin/creole continua.

Lehrberger's Chart

binary machine language
assembly language
.
.
BASIC
.
.
PASCAL
.
.
.
ADA
.
.
.
query languages
.
.
.
English (p. 35)

English is arguably the natural language from which most computerese derived since the first programmers were English speakers. Computer pidgins in Arabic, Russian, Twi, Norwegian or other natural languages are obviously relexified English-based pidgins. Relexification introduces other natural language vocabulary but preserves traces of the original English syntax. By adding examples of comparable natural language pidgins and creoles to the stages of Lehrberger's "continuum", a fairly accurate model of the linguistic development between numerical machine code and target English emerges. (See Figure 1.)

Of course, the best model of a computerese continuum would follow one base operational language through its various dialects and subdialects so that obvious progression toward target English syntax would be exemplified. In the expanded version of

Computer Language: A Continuum Model.

Computer Languages	Creole Continuum
binary machine language	initial contact
job control language	basic pidgin (trading lang.)
.	. (Cargo Jargon)
.	.
compiler (eg. YACC)	
.	depiginized forms
BASIC	
.	
Sublanguages	
PASCAL	creoles
.	(eg. Gullah, Spanglish)
ADA	
.	
QUERY	
.	decreolized forms
.	(Contemporary Gullah)
.	(Black English ?)
ENGLISH	ENGLISH

Figure 1.

Lehrberger's illustration it is obvious that at base pidgin or first contact level is found machine code, the least English of the stages in the continuum. This is closely followed by an early contact job-control commanding stage which would exhibit a strictly limited vocabulary and simplistic syntactic structure. Translation and compiling language stages, further along the continuum, would evidence expanded vocabulary and complex sentence syntax which, predictably, is unEnglish but more English-like than earlier stages are. Finally at the level of query language, computerese becomes most like target English. Obviously any model would necessarily be inaccurate since the starting point of the continuum is a numerical sequence rather than a reduction of a natural language like Vietnamese, Spanish or Cree, and any interference factors would derive from math language rather than from natural language syntax. Since computer languages are function related, a sub-continuum model could be constructed for operating and query languages devised for performance of a more mathematical function (Algol and Modular One, for example) as opposed to a word processing or data management function (like Cobol and Ada). Whatever model is constructed, however; the continuum ranges from base numerical coding to near-target English.

Pursuing the decreolization process becomes irrelevant at this point in the discussion. What is specifically relevant is that each stage of the continuum represents an increased degree of grammatical proficiency whether the program objective is mathematical or linguistic processing. Job-control, for example, has a verb centric grammar. Its primary syntactic pattern, whether realized in the 150 words and strings of BASIC or as the thousands of commands listed in the manual for a Sun workstation, is invariably headed by an imperative verb. Since computer register limited meaning verbs are English derivatives, they carry much of the grammatical force of the full English verb from which they were derived; therefore they remain one, two or three place verbs. Because they operate on the text immediately at hand, RUN, PRINT and DELETE usually operate as one place imperatives which require no further specification of "What", "Where" or "To Which". MOVE on the other hand is like COPY in that, as a three place verb, it requires a direct object ("What", i.e. file name, paragraph block, line) as well as a second object or location case form (To Which, Where). The extended job control sentence, therefore, has a recognizable syntax of imperative verb plus complementation.

Examples of job control commands in the above paragraph relate to a stage of computing which allowed simple typing in of commands via the keyboard. Because this resulted in typographical error and loss of time for the user, mousing and menuing procedures have been introduced which alleviate the problem of typographical error and also allow for entering larger scale commands at greater speed. Though at present these commands are only rarely user typed, they nevertheless are based in human language and rely on natural language grammatical systems. Word Perfect 5.0, for example, allows for choice of imperative verb commands like COMPILE, LINK, BUILD, MAKE, RUN; and a program like Speed Edit allows choice from elaborations of complementations like WHILE (*pp) pp++; return pp; void attrset (attrs); char attrs; etc. which quite obviously present an intricate mix of imperative verb and adverbial subordinator forms. Speed Edit also allows for complementation expansion in a conditional mode with a series of IF commands which operate as: IF; #end if; # if identifier; # if def; rlen; compr; if; win[cnum].recsize=, etc. Even though such instructions are moused and menued into the machine, they nevertheless employ linguistic and grammatical form to "talk" to the computer.

Between job-control language and Query languages are a number of syntactic stages, for instance compiler and translator languages. Of these nothing will be said in this paper since the Query type language best indicates grammatical variance with job-control syntax. Also Query syntax is directly available to the user (though in reality rarely applied in its raw form), whereas knowledge and experience of translator and compiler language syntax is useless to any user other than a programmer. Of course when the non-programmer user makes a mistake and is faced with jargon like "Fault at 440B", this may have resulted from user syntax error affecting translator/compiler facilities. A Query type language enables the user to question the machine, if for instance a bank of information terminals were available at an airport, in a language form most like English. The user might type "questions" similar to the following:

When does the plane to Boston leave?
When does the next plane leave?
Is food served on the Detroit plane?
From which gate does the (Chicago) plane leave?
How long before the Dallas plane arrives?

Although Query systems employ various grammatical techniques for the analysis and decipherment of user generated sentences, for instance a combination of context free and context sensitive parsing, transformation, networking, etc., the Query system essentially focusses on nouns typed in by the user rather

Premodification:

1 (predeterminer) determiner (post determiner) (adjective+5)

BOTH	A	ordinal cardinal		age adj.
ALL	THE	FIRST	ONE	measure adj.
HALF	THIS	SECOND	TWO	color adj.
	THAT	THIRD	THREE	etc.

quantifier
OTHER
FEW
REST
etc.

2 (prenoun) head noun

CHURCH	DOOR
BIRCH	WOOD
CHERRY	FLAVOR

3 Postmodification

(apposition) (postposed adjective) (verbal) (relative)

Figure 2.

than an imperative verb. Although this is an over simplification of the process, the parser generally translates any of a series of WH or question words, or any question mark in the query as one overriding imperative similar to SELECT FROM LISTS. Therefore even the hurried traveler who types "Scranton departure?" can be given precise information on the next departure for Boston. The question sensitivity of a Query system and its reduction of all inquiries to a single imperative verb is less significant than its noun sensitivity. The focal syntactic feature of any query system is its ability to recognize the nouns in the typed question as elements in "fields" specified as PLACE, TIME, DEPARTURE, ARRIVAL, SERVICES, TRANSPORTATION, LUGGAGE, GATE, etc. What the computer reads in the message it reorders via syntactic processing is:

? (Select), Plane, Boston, Departure,
? (Select), Gate, Plane, Boston, Departure,
? (Select), Plane, Dallas, Arrival,
? (Select), Food, Albany, Plane.

In the absence of a specified departure/arrival time, for instance:

At which gate does the Phoenix arrival dock?

the computer, having recognized GATE, ARRIVAL and PHOENIX as relevant to its limited categories but having ignored all other terms than WHICH, merely assumes NEXT for the time of departure/arrival. It is evident that the predominant grammatical structure recognition form at Query level of the computerese continuum focusses in noun case rather than imperative verb retrieval. The case grammar basis for most Query type languages is evidenced especially well in the system developed by Wallace (1984) despite Wallace's claim that the system merely perfects the "field" presentation SELECT approach.

It is obvious that the grammar used by a computer translation system and described in this paper as a continuum model is a series of simplifications of natural language English grammar. As illustrated above, job control syntax is imperative verb centric; early query language is noun case dependent after paying necessary homage to a governing SELECT imperative verb. Translator and compiler language is largely algebraic and focussed upon an X equals Y copular-like proposition; T-Quel, a Query subset, appends adverbial facility absent from the query noun case syntax.

What a grammar instructor can do with computerese in, for instance, the freshman composition class is to provide examples of command or query "sentences". Such examples evidence grammar at work for the students since they are clear and concrete illustrations that syntax underlies communication by language. More specifically they provide a point of comparison between the extremely limited imperative verb or noun case systems used in interface and more elaborate grammars available in natural language English texts. Since many naive freshmen tend to dismiss grammar as irrelevant, dull or boring, yet are awed by computer function, such students often appreciate a working model. Simple exercises which encourage a student to build or extend an element of a computer language grammar can generate knowledge and interest in verb-predication relationship, in the stylizing that depends on noun case shifts, or in pre- and postmodification of the head noun. An exercise that is particularly effective requires the class to build a full description of the noun phrase in English taking into account what the computer must be able to recognize, all forms of premodification and postmodification. The task involved entails the complete presentation of all noun phrase elements as well as restriction rules for overlap. The final product for the determiner + head noun construction

would appear as in Figure 2.

Student production of a model as graphic as this can induce interest in and recognition of relative clauses, their functions, types and restrictions. It indicates the wide variety of premodificational forms and can lead to an appreciation of the specifying power each form provides. An extension of the noun phrase exercise requests students to list possible substitutes for Determiner+Head Noun phrases thus offering opportunity to experience Adjective-Headed Phrases, Non-finite Clauses, Pronoun Phrases, etc. Since the exercise aims at production of a perfect model that is useful to the computer, it forces students to become aware that subject-headed non-finite clauses and postmodified pronouns are viable alternatives to the simple and unvaried noun phrases that appear in their essays.

In upper level courses, especially those designed to prepare teachers of English and grammar who too often believe the teaching of English is the teaching of literature alone, use of computer grammar models can provide a concrete framework for otherwise abstract and unfathomable -- from the student point of view -- grammatical terminology. Furthermore, such models can give incentive to teacher candidates to view grammatical systems as realistic and applicable rather than as abstracted. Analysis of a computer language string can appear more purposeful to the future grammar teacher and might induce that teacher candidate to consider grammatical analysis as a vibrant, realistic process rather than as an isolated unit in a set, mandatory curriculum.

In upper level linguistics and writing courses, the computer model is also useful as concrete exemplification of language operation and manipulation, text analysis, style and register development, pidginization process, and language universals. What better model of a case system or of the implications of topicalization of noun phrases could a linguistics instructor find than that represented in Query languages? Computer grammars are operating systems which obviously have been built and obviously generate language strings. Operative systems will most certainly impress students as more realistic than will analytical systems which are drawn and immobile, for instance the various diagramming and illustrative systems used in textbooks to aid student understanding and analysis.

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Using Transformational Grammar to Teach Future Teachers

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On the first day of my grammar seminar, I was noticing my students' reaction to the subject matter -- grammar and syntax. They were all absolutely terrified of this "unknown territory" which makes no sense to them. A few were honest enough to admit their fear of grammar, but most were quick to dismiss its value. They have read, after all, in various articles that knowledge of grammar does not make their students better writers; they can cover their own fears by dismissing the whole area as worthless. Understanding the structure of language and the power that this knowledge brings is the key to changing their negative attitude. Syntax, after all, is not simply looking at the relationship between words in a sentence, but is primarily an issue of style and power; having control over our structure gives us the ability to manipulate it for rhetorical/discourse effects, for polished, vivid writing.

The "tool" that I have chosen to use in those classes in order to help students understand the structure of language and overcome their fear of grammar is transformational generative grammar (TGG) -- the basic concepts of the standard theory (1965) which are accessible and intuitively clear to all levels of students. In order to explain to students sentence organization, however, I introduce form/function definitions of parts of speech, as well as the concept of distribution and substitution.

The theoretical discussion on Transformational Generative Grammar is kept to a minimum and is primarily focused on the basic principles and advantages of the theory. The distinction between competence and performance is one of the most important ones: the underlying knowledge of our language is reflected in our speech and writing, in our performance. In other words, our performance reflects our competence. Consequently, systematic errors in performance cannot be attributed to laziness or incompetence, but should be examined in light of what they reveal about our competence. For example, the construction "I have went" can easily be perceived as an isolated error due to deficient language abilities. However, this is not an isolated error nor is it unexplainable; students create this form by analogy to other constructions where the past tense form and the past participle forms are identical. Since my students are primarily elementary and secondary education majors, understanding that performance reflects competence and that errors are systematic and explainable is important to their teaching.

An important TGG principle that is intuitively clear for them is phrase structure rules. The structure of the whole language can be captured with a set of rules, limited in number, which we intuitively know and are made aware of simply by observing language around us; these rules generate the basic structure of an infinite number of sentences in

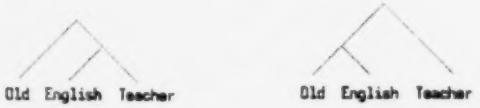
our language. Students discover these rules on their own; for example, based on their linguistic competence and using as their source actual sentences they have produced, they can clearly describe the various combinations for a noun phrase: article and noun, proper noun, article, adjective, noun, etc.

Less clear for them but equally important is the concept of deep structure because it is not immediately apparent to students that they use a kernel/base sentence when they use language. In order to show them that they think in terms of deep structure, I ask them to teach me how to form yes-no questions in English. Invariably, the instructions I get are "move the verb to the beginning of the sentence" -- a statement which reveals they think of the deep structure "base sentence" first and then transform it to the yes/no question. They realize, then, that phrase-structure rules, deep structure and transformational rules are already part of their unconscious knowledge of the language, that the material isn't unfamiliar to them nor is it as daunting as they believed it to be.

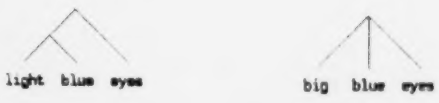
But the greatest benefit that I derive from using transformational generative grammar in my teaching is from the phrase structure trees which are easier to read and understand than IC diagrams. Students can see not only the first major division of a sentence into subject and predicate, which is in accordance with their native speakers' intuition, but also constituent structure --how the various words are put together--, the linear order of the elements (left to right arrangement) and the part of speech of each word.

Looking at constituent structure, we first define "parts of speech" on the basis of form and function -- distribution and use. Once again, students use their intuitive knowledge of the language to determine which words belong to which categories based on properties. For example, instead of defining a verb as "action or state of being", we look at its formal characteristics, such as person and tense marker, which uniquely define it. In addition, we look at its distribution; a finite verb can always be preceded by a pronoun, whereas a participle or a noun cannot. It is often hard for them to think of these categories without resorting to notional definitions. Making the transition, however, from notional definitions to form/function is the first, most important step forward because they realize that distinctions in grammar are not arbitrary but can always be justified.

Understanding constituent structure has some practical applications as well. It is often difficult for them to explain instances of structural ambiguity, ambiguity due to the way words are put together; they know a phrase is ambiguous, but they often cannot explain the reasons for this ambiguity. Using constituent structure and diagramming, they can see how a phrase such as Old English teacher is ambiguous:



In my years of teaching, I have never seen a student use a structurally ambiguous sentence, and I believe that my student-teachers won't either; therefore, we could argue that there is no real benefit in understanding constituent structure since it does not have practical applications. This is not true, however, since constituent structure can be used to show the proper punctuation of two or more adjectives depending on whether or not they are coordinate adjectives:



As my students often admit, they have never really understood how to punctuate ad-

jectives; understanding punctuation through the use of constituent structure gives them control over their language.

I often use the analogy of Lego building blocks to show them the value of understanding constituent structure; we build a Lego house by putting various Legos together in whichever way seems appropriate; there is one restriction, however, and that is that we need to know which Legos can go with which ones. We cannot attach a block on a flat surface Lego, for example. Similarly, when we want to create sentences, we need to know which words -- "building blocks" -- can go together and which ones cannot. After we have the basic structure, we can manipulate it, polish it, "embellish" it, just like we can decorate the house we built. If we are not satisfied with the product, we can rearrange the building blocks to make a better or different structure. Having a good grasp of syntax gives us confidence; we are not controlled by my language, we are not at its mercy because we don't know how to put the blocks together; rather, we control my structure and we can manipulate it to our advantage.

One of the principles of TGG that students find rather opaque and not intuitive at first glance is the structure of the Auxiliary (AUX) as presented in early versions of Transformational Generative Grammar -- the separation of tense and auxiliaries from the lexical verb. AUX consists of obligatory tense (present or past) -- a requirement for all sentences to have a finite verb --, and the optional elements modality (may, can, will, shall, etc.) and aspect perfect (have) and progressive (be). This structure is often perceived as merely a theoretical construct, a "trick" necessary for the theory to work. The structure of the AUX, however, is justified on the basis of its behavior in Yes/No questions and negative statements: it is tense and whatever immediately follows it (modal, perfect or progressive) that gets fronted in a question. We can intuitively show that tense is the element that gets fronted in Yes/No questions when we form present or past tense questions; in those instances, the auxiliary Do that gets added, carries the tense of the sentence while the lexical verb, which in the affirmative sentence was tensed, becomes untensed. Understanding the properties and the behavior of AUX is particularly important for ESL teachers when explaining the formation of questions and negations in English.

Another advantage of discussing the structure of AUX is that students understand the different functions of BE -- a concept which can be difficult for some. If BE is used for the progressive aspect, it will be followed by an -ing affix attached to the verb and it will be part of the base/kernel sentence. If, on the other hand, BE is followed by a "verb" with the affix -ed or -en attached to it, then it is one of the markers of passive voice -- the result of a transformation. If not followed by another lexical verb, then BE is the main verb of the sentence.

Using tree diagrams (phrase structure diagrams) and constituent structure, we can explain clearly dangling participials, ambiguous modifiers, run-on sentences, fragments, and the punctuation of compound and complex sentences. Let's examine each of these closely and see how tree diagrams provide a clear explanation of these phenomena:

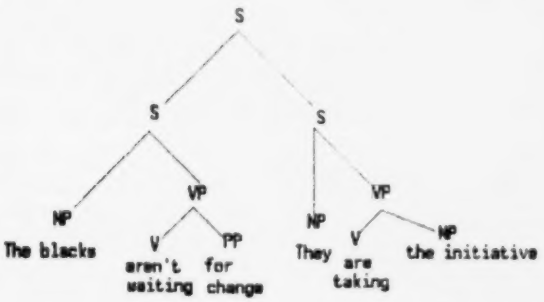
Run-on Sentences

One of the most common errors I see in student writing involves sentence punctuation, especially run-on sentences and comma splices. A tree diagram helps me explain to them proper sentence punctuation. Each tree diagram shows us the binary structure of a sentence, with the two obligatory elements, the subject (NP) and the predicate (VP); when we can create a tree for two sentences,

we must also provide the "glue" to hold them together -- the conjunction or semi-colon -- or we need to separate them into two different sentences. For example, in the tree diagram for the following sentence written by a freshman

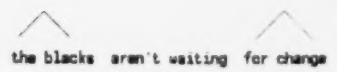
> The blacks aren't waiting for change, they are taking the initiative

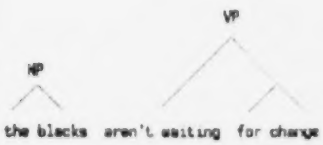
we see that the two sentences aren't connected

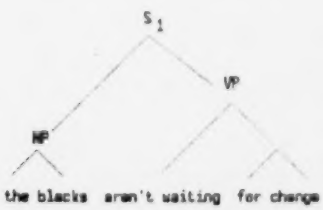


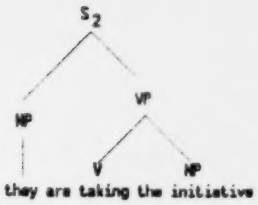
properly:

It is easy to show why this is a run-on sentence drawing the tree bottom up, using constituent structure on each step. The advantage of building a tree bottom up (instead of top down) is that students see how individual words belonging to various parts of speech group together to form larger groups/constituents.









It may be argued that we can achieve the same results -- identifying and correcting run-on sentences -- without using a tree. As a matter of fact, a lot of students are taught to simply identify the subjects and the verbs in the sentence and make sure that if there are two subjects and two verbs -- two sentences -- there is a coordinating conjunction to join them. The advantage of using a tree diagram, however, is that it provides a visual representation of the sentence with its left-to-right ordering and hierarchical structure, and it also helps them see the structural differences between compound and complex sentences. In addition, using a tree diagram clarifies any confusion which may arise regarding the punctuation of compound predicates or conjoined subjects; our tree consists of a two-component sentence, each component being a sentence itself with a subject (NP) and a predicate (VP); if we had a compound predicate, for example, we would have two VP's but only one subject NP.

Complex Sentences

How to punctuate complex sentences when the dependent sentence follows the independent one is not always clear to my students; often, they will separate the inde-

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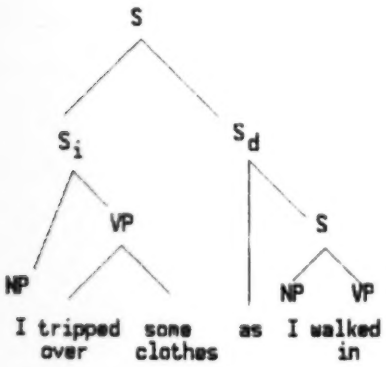
pendent from the dependent sentence with a comma since "that is where they would take a breath." Once again, I use tree diagrams to show how a complex sentence is constructed and how it should be properly punctuated.

I tripped over some clothes
as I walked in.

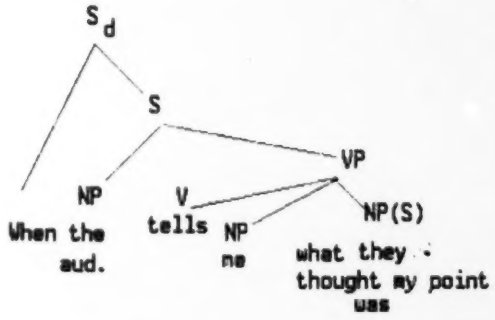


An additional advantage to using tree diagrams to show the structure of complex sentences is that students clearly see the difference between dependent and independent clauses; the dependent sentence is a complete sentence preceded by a subordinating conjunction (I always give them a list of the most commonly used subordinating conjunctions) and must be joined with an independent sentence, which obviously is not preceded by a subordinator. Understanding dependent and complex sentences helps them correct any punctuation problems they have including fragments.

Fragments

Fragments are another source of frustration for teachers and students alike; by using tree diagrams, it is very easy to show some of the reasons students write fragments in their papers: dependent sentences or constructions with no tense or auxiliary but only a participle. In the following example, it is easy to see on the tree diagram how the fragment was created:

When the audience tells me
what they thought my point was.

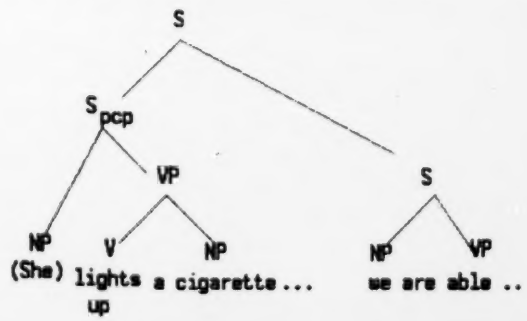


Dangling Participles

Recently, while reading a freshman's paper, I noticed the following sentence early in the introduction:

Lighting up a cigarette to relax
and clear her mind, we are able to start.

Realizing that something was wrong with this sentence was not difficult for my grammar students; however, explaining to me what exactly was the cause of the error and how to correct it presented a few difficulties. In some versions of TGG, the participial phrase is a reduced clause; that is, the deep structure of the participial phrase is a clause with a subject and a finite verb which is reduced to a participle. In case there is a mismatch between the two subjects, changing the verb into a participle will create a dangling modifier.



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Including the implicit subject of the participial in the deep structure clearly shows the mismatch between subjects and the reason the dangling participial was created.

The last important concept of TGG, Transformational rules -- changing the structure of a sentence without affecting its meaning -- is always intuitive for the students although the format of the rules can be daunting to some. It is clear, for example, that when they create a passive sentence from an active base sentence, they use a transformational rule: they move the patient to subject position and that they add the passive BE, thus transforming the active voice verb into a passive voice verb. Understanding the principle behind transformational rules -- that only structure is affected while meaning remains unchanged -- has important practical applications: students can manipulate the sentence structure to shift emphasis and focus in the sentence. For example, in the following sentence, the subject is in sentence initial position, a low focus position where old information is placed.

> Three main events characterize my life so far.

Changing/transforming a base sentence into an extraposed sentence beginning with the expletive "there" puts the subject, an unfocused element of the sentence, into a focused position where new information is placed:

> There have been three main events that characterize my life so far.

Once again, TGG draws on the native speakers' intuitive ability to manipulate the various elements of a sentence and brings into consciousness syntactic constructions such as the one above that some find unclear at best or intimidating at worst.

I hope that it has become clear by now that the advantages of this theory, its elegance, simplicity and reliance on intuition, far outweigh the difficulty of some concepts. By the end of the term, students clearly see that language is rational and well organized and that they can rely on their intuition to untangle and understand often opaque syntactic constructions. But they also understand the importance of performance errors and what they reveal about our competence, they can see schematically the hierarchical structure of a sentence, they understand most of the principles of punctuation through diagrams, and they can manipulate their sentences through transformations for rhetorical effects. Syntax and grammar, then, are not the "unknown territory" any more, the area accessible to a selected few. They have developed the skills to analyze and understand most constructions, and they can change sentences for specific reasons; in other words, they have control and power over their language, they are not at its mercy any more.

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